

- f. The reason for confidence is not to maintain salvation but to not “ **stumble** ”
- (1). The term “fall” does not refer to defeat or death but simply to “trip”
    - It has the idea to lose one’s footing - it will hurt and may cause delay but one can and will press on - especially with our Father being the commanding officer
  - (2). It is the distraction of focus, direction and purpose
- g. The confidence of our salvation and calling keeps us steady
- It is far better to be on the offensive than the defensive!
- h. The fact that we may be bothered by the **lack** of the key traits is a good sign
2. Who is the “ **Agent** ” of salvation?
- a. Those convinced of election / predestination place it solely upon God so it would be impossible to lose salvation
  - b. Those who reject election and still hold to salvation being based solely upon the merits of Christ must also believe that the loss of salvation is impossible
    - If it rests on Him how could any aspect of it pivot on me?
  - c. Those who place partial responsibility (power) upon God and some on man are the ones who run into a **mental** dilemma
    - (1). These exclude themselves from the list of those who can be taken out of God’s “hand” - John 10:28-29
    - (2). If one ascribes to themselves power to “bring on” salvation, then they can also see themselves losing it (or giving it up)
3. Is salvation a gift and does a true gift have any “strings” attached? - Eph. 2:8-9
- a. In this passage the word “gift” means “a present”
    - (1). It is like blood, often called the “gift of life” given to a dying person **unconscious** of his dying state
    - (2). “God justifies the believing man, not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him in whom he believes” HOOKER
  - b. In Romans 6:23 it is the gift meaning an “endowment” or “gratuity”
    - There is no place in Scripture which indicates “strings attached” with this gift of God
  - c. To say there are obligations to keep the gift is to make it a “non-gift” and makes it also a responsibility of my own: this places my salvation on me!
    - If one says that God offered redemption and purging from my sin (as His work) and that the price was totally on Christ (as His work), and I am sealed by the Spirit (as His work), then how can they say I can disbelieve or sin or reject and lose this salvation as my work? This then makes me the usurper of all the works of the Trinity! Dare I tread on such ground?
4. Should we evangelize? (If it is up to God, why bother witnessing?)
- a. First of all, it is the Scriptural **example** and instruction
    - (1). Many who yield to the “sovereignty belief” fall prey to fatalistic thinking
    - (2). This is one of the first accusations of those called “Calvinists”
    - (3). Sadly, many have come to back this with their actions
  - b. It is a point of **privilege** (calling) and obedience
    - (1). It seems as though many forget the accounting at the Judgment Seat of Christ in II Cor. 5:10
    - II Cor. 5:18-19 — (2). Along with this passage, Paul indicates the responsibility given which is termed the “ministry of reconciliation” using the “word of reconciliation”
    - (3). We, knowing the “terror of the Lord” persuade men - it is our motivation

What would cause one to want to be “free” of such a calling and privilege?

11. A synopsis of this later part of Romans 9

- a. The whole plan/scheme pivots solely on the **will** of God
- b. As the "Potter" He has all rights to do as he desires with the "clay"
- c. His endurance with the wicked (vessels of wrath) was for the purpose to show His mercy to the "vessels of mercy"

(1). His incredible mercy was seen in that He called them from even among the Gentiles - vs. 24

Again, we are the "works of His hands" — not the work of our own hands

(2). The example of the 10 tribes of Israel that had "left" the Lord - They would again be called "my people" - vs. 25-26 (Hosea 2:23)

(3). It was **God's** plan, not their's

d. This all was predicted by Isaiah - vs. 27-29

If God formerly purposed to recall to himself a people whom he had rejected; if he bestowed favours on his own people after they had forfeited his favour, and ceased to be entitled to the name of "his people" then the same thing was not to be regarded as absurd if he dealt in a similar manner with the Gentiles, also a part of his original great family--the family of man--but long since rejected and deemed strangers. - Barnes

e. All of this demonstrated that the "seeking" of righteousness by the Law through works will miss it, and those "finding" it and "attaining" it in faith will have it! - vs. 30-32

12. God's plan would not fit the seemingly obvious ideal of man - vs. 25-26

- a. Paul used the example in Hosea to demonstrate this concept - not that he was referring to the Gentiles, but that all was based on God's plan of mercy
- b. Those not know for being "loved" of God would be (out of His kindness He wanted to - just as we received His love and grace!)
- c. This concept should stir in us a permanent gratefulness and dedication (obligation) to **live** all for Him and His purposes
- d. Life is not about what appeals to man but what appeals to God

G. God's plan for Israel, at this point, was only for a "remnant" - a few - vs. 27-29

1. Though Israel was numerous as a people, still only a "remnant" would be saved

- a. God's working and "success" is not based upon numbers and predictable **results** (as man, by his nature, sees success)
- b. Many, as alluded to before, might consider the "promises and word" of God as having failed because of the "poor" response from Israel. But, as clarified here, this was not God's plan all along. A remnant (as if a left over) would be "saved" from Israel and an open door would then be opened for the Gentiles to enter
- c. Our Lord referred to this in Mt. 8:5-12 when remarking about the faith of the centurion and the fact that many from all directions would "dine" with Abraham and the others while the "children of the kingdom" would be cast out
- d. God will be right in His judgment - vs. 28 - all will be done as He says

Much of today looks upon life (and effectiveness) with the site of their eyes and minds and not with the sight of their faith in the workings of a sovereign God

He has, is and always will be flawless (precise) in what He does

• He will finish what He has started (His will) and will do it concisely

2. All success, seemingly small or great rests upon God's working - vs. 29

- a. "Unless the LORD..." - Had it not been for God...
- b. "But for this precious seed, the chosen people would have resembled the cities of the plain, both in degeneracy of character and in merited doom." JFB
- c. Apart from God's powerful work in us, as with Israel, we would also become as those of Sodom and Gomorah in our sinfulness of self-will and attempts at self-determination
- d. He, the one Who is working is the "Lord of Hosts" - all the hosts of Heaven
- e. It was this "remnant", this left over group that God would ultimately use for "sowing" the "seed" they possessed (the Truth)
- f. Of this, we are the **fortunate** recipients!

## XV. True Saving Faith as Evidence of God's Working - 9:30-10:21

### A. God's working as evidenced in the directions of men - 9:30-33

1. "What shall we say then...?" - what conclusions are drawn from what has been said?
2. Look how things "worked out" to see that this was God's **plan** all along
  - a. The Gentiles (nations) had not sought after this justifying righteousness
  - b. They "obtained it" based **solely** on faith - the first word for "followed" has the idea of a diligent search seeking to apprehend something. This they were not doing and yet "apprehended" righteousness found only in faith
  - c. The Jews, who pursued diligently this righteousness did not "catch-up" to it as they sought it based upon their works (working)
3. The concept of this "reliant" faith was foreign to the Jews
  - a. It is a submissive "cooperation" on our part, not just at salvation, but in the soon to come **growing** of a new believer
  - b. Many of the works we pursue after spiritual birth are nested in our efforts alone, based upon our natural reasoning - these are fruitless
  - c. Self-effort (will), which is the foundation to the concept of iniquity, will be a regular "opponent" to genuine growth and works for God
  - d. We read and study the Scriptures not to come up with things to do as much as to know what to do with what God **gives** us to do (brings)
  - e. The Jews literally did not "measure-up" to the Law they aspired to attain
4. This concept of reliant faith was a "stumbling stone" to the Jews
  - a. It was and still is as an obstacle that trips them up in their path
  - b. The intent of the Law was not that they should use it to obtain justifying righteousness, though the law is righteous
    - Christ fulfilled the Law and He was the way to this righteousness
  - c. Ultimately and realistically, it was an obstacle because of their pride and stubbornness to take "**credit**"
5. This was predicted, proving this as God's plan all along, in Isaiah - Isa. 8:14; 28:16
  - a. God would set Christ as this "corner stone" as the foundation to His means to justification for us, and this foundation stone would be a stumblingblock to those seeking to justify themselves by their works.
  - b. Those placing their confidence upon this "stone" will never be ashamed
    - (1). Literally, not confounded or disappointed to a point of shame
    - (2). In Isaiah, the idea was that of "in a hurry" - as if having to panic at the last finding the "real solution" or that one could not rest because of their lack of certainty in this foundation as being fully **reliable** (sure footing)
  - c. This faith is evidenced by the lack of worry over being in a position of pleasing God
    - Pleasing God in the ultimate sense of justification
6. Again, the motivation of the believer in Christ is not one of seeking to earn justifying favor with God, but the freedom to work from the justifying favor, already attained, of God
  - a. We labor (obey/submit) for the right as a soldier already recruited - II Tim. 2
  - b. We are drive to please a child already "in the family" - Rom. 8; John 3
  - c. We produce fruit as ones already a part of the Vine - Jn. 15
7. The ultimate goal of maturity is that of gratefulness, dependance, and **obedience**
  - This was and is always to be the focus and output of our faith

All of creation was for God's glory and will be so used with or without the creation's cooperation

See Luke 20:17, \_\_\_\_\_  
I Pet. 2:6-7

He, Christ, was the cornerstone of God's work, not the cornerstone FOR our work!

8. Error with the Truth will have devastating results - it, Truth, becomes an obstacle
- If rejected or neglected, it becomes a “force” to be reckoned with or avoided
  - “Error is often a greater obstacle to the salvation of men than carelessness or vice... Let no man think error in doctrine a slight practical evil. No road to perdition has ever been more thronged than that of false doctrine. Error is a shield over the conscience and a bandage over the eyes.”

Hodge——

B. A genuine prayer for a genuinely deceived people - 10:1-3

- Paul’s heart “desire” - what he wishes for and delights in - vs. 1
  - Many say that when one believes in the full sovereignty of God, that the burden for the lost will be lost
  - As so well illustrated here, this is not the case - still knowing God’s control, we still demonstrate **His** burden for the “lost”
- “The divine decree is not the guide of human supplication, but the benevolent feeling of the pious heart. Since no man knows what the divine decree is, and who the reprobate are, the prayer for the salvation of men must be indiscriminate, and for all without exception.” Shedd
- Genuineness of Truth is not seen only in one’s theology but also in his heart/burden
  - Biblical Theology is to produce **practical** theology (practice)
- As to be clarified in a moment, motive & sincerity do not dictate Truth either
- Paul could “testify” to the zeal for God that the Jews had - vs. 2
  - They had a passion for God and His name (it was genuine in many)
  - But this zeal/passion was misdirected by their inclusions and exclusions
  - They allowed (included) what was not of God and they left out (excluded) the **aim** of what God had given them in the Law
- They (the Jews) developed standards and guides to “better” define the Law
  - These “protective barriers” were designed to stop the people from “treading” too close to breaking a law
  - By and large, these were good things but became over prioritized
  - These became “laws” in and of themselves and were then dictated by man
  - This, then skewed the purpose of the Law and they missed its purpose
- This zeal was **misdirected** - “not according to knowledge”
  - They were not guided by genuine insight into the Truth
  - Their situation was two-fold:
    - (1). They, being ignorant (not knowing) - they were wrong in their beliefs
    - (2). They sought, as if with eagerness, their own standards
  - God is not interested in our work for Him but His work in us!
- This led to a stubborn posturing before God
  - They “would not subject themselves” - they would not yield their position
  - They would not allow themselves to be humbled under “vicarious” righteousness rather than their own personal attempts at it
- Even after salvation this remains a struggle of the will and of the thoughts
  - God has laid out is ideals of sanctification and maturity
  - We adulterate them when we **add** to them in content or emphasis
  - We devalue them when we **neglect** them or deemphasize them
  - As with the Jews, we are apt to “lean on our own understanding” (opinions) which usually leads to self honor or glorification rather than “acknowledging Him” in all our ways seeking His direct leading on what are truly proper paths - Pr. 3:5-6

We, as rightfully deserving condemnation, should not condemn people in our thoughts or words

My heart, attitudes, thoughts, motives and actions are dictated by the Truth!

A misdirected focus leads to a misdirected heart and a misdirected heart leads to a misdirected purpose

Our goal is to find our and follow God’s ideals over our ideals seeking to develop our opinions to match God’s

C. Christ was the goal, direction and the end of the Law - vs. 4-13

1. The law's demands were to be kept in **full** to be justified by it
2. Man, in his natural inability, could not keep it, thus cannot be justified by it
3. Christ, being the "second Adam" in Romans 5, kept it in full, and His vicarious sacrifice on our behalf
  - Though, this righteousness is only applied to those who "believe" in Him
4. Beware self-condemnation if you are "in Christ"
  - a. Many will categorize their sins and believe that some of theirs are unforgiven
  - b. Many will picture themselves as in a position where God cannot help
  - c. Christ kept the Law in full, and in Him, we are genuinely justified - thus we are motivated with the power of assured victory, not with the overbearing motive of trying to please God with our own "perfection"
5. A person who seeks to live by the Law must fulfill it to live - vs. 5
  - a. Paul quotes from Lev. 18:5 - if the Law is "done" they would live
  - b. Thus, the flip-side, if the Law is not **lived**, they could not live
  - c. This is the righteousness of works in contrast to that of faith
6. The righteousness by faith contrasted - vs. 6-8
  - a. God is interested only in **His** perfection, not our facade/pretense of it
    - This is why honesty before God is best - God is not mocked!
  - b. The "righteousness based on faith" - we trust His work on our behalf
  - c. Paul alluded to the illustrations in Deut. 30:12-14 - This is where Israel is challenged to obey the Law and is told that is not too difficult (to find) as if needing to be wrought down from Heaven or from across the sea but that it was near to them
  - d. So it really is with righteousness by faith - Do not say "who will ascend in to Heaven) as if needing the impossibility of bringing down such righteousness
    - Christ had already come from Heaven - He is God's righteousness
  - e. Do not say who will "descend into the abyss?" - Christ has already triumphed over sin and its **result** of death
  - f. So, what does "it" (righteousness by faith personified) say?
    - As alluded to in Deut., it is near you, in you mouth and heart
  - g. It is readily and easily accessible - it is not the doing, it is the **believing**
    - This was the essence of what they were "proclaiming"
7. The essence of salvation by the righteousness obtained by faith - vs. 9-10
  - a. Look at the evidence of conversion - vs. 9
    - (1). There is confession with the mouth - without this confession it would be lacking in credibility - it is faith at work
    - (2). This confession finds its source in the heart - that God raised Him from the dead - He conquered death - in His perfection
  - b. In the "heart" (inner most being) of a man he believes - stakes his soul on it
    - This belief results in righteousness - As the example of Abraham in chapter 4 - his faith was "reckoned" as righteousness - trusted God
  - c. With the mouth confession is made (it is made known) - demonstrated
    - Fictitious faith does not produce any form of confession (living)
  - d. This is the essence of our living - Col. 2:6 - as received... so walk
    - (1). We will not obey God where we do not **trust** Him
    - (2). Trust is built more by obedience (proving His rightness in all things!)

Christ was the fulfillment of the Law for us so that we need not bear the burden of our sins any longer

And God "righteousness" died on our behalf by the will of the overseeing Judge of the Universe!

This is what characterizes the person who is "saved"

Without the heart the confession is hypocritical

Nowhere is the idea that our faith is ever rightfully placed in ourselves to any degree - we trust fully and confess openly that we "bank" on the work of God in Christ on our behalf for the salvation of our souls!

Isa. 28:16 ———

When one "banks" on the wrong thing they are embarrassed when the checks of confidence "bounce" for lack of funds

Ours is not a life to be looked upon as one of "picking and choosing" - we obey as he directs, we are faithful with what He gives us

In reality, our confession of His being Lord should remind us that we are not here to do our own "bidding" either

- e. Confession, at its most basic idea is, "to speak that which agrees with something which others speak or maintain." - in this case, God
- f. It, as genuine, simply reflects the belief of the heart - if confession is made without the heart backing, it lacks integrity - it will not stand up to scrutiny (especially before the all seeing eyes of God) and will buckle under pressure
8. This whole idea communicates the essence of our **faith** - Eph. 2:8-9
- a. We hear often the example of placing faith in a chair to hold one's weight
- b. We may believe it will hold us, we may believe it exists, but it will not hold us until we **sit** in it (we rely upon it)
- c. As in verse 11, we will not be ashamed (literally to blush) but the original idea in Isaiah was not to have to make "haste" as if to have to make last minute plans as the ones depended on have let us down
- d. It is with our heart we "attain" righteousness (of Christ) - literally in verse 10 one "believes to righteousness" - we must also trust God with the area of our "practical righteousness" - to work it out - He has begun it - Php. 1:6
9. This idea is to communicate the essence of our **lives** - vs. 11
- a. We fully believe that we will not be ashamed, confident in our God/Savior
- b. As we have "banked" on His work and grace, we continue to "bank" on Him and His grace as we face the trials of life (as if, when faced with a "debt-load" of trouble, we "write our checks" (deal with them) with faith in His grace
- c. This "not being ashamed" should be confessed with our mouths and lives!
10. The whole acknowledgment of faith is clarified in one title in verse 9
- a. The idea of "...confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus..."
- b. It, as clearly as possible, tells us that we confess Jesus as Lord
- c. This is an agreement that He is Lord over all, including my **soul** (life)
- We acknowledge He is dictator over all
- d. Thus, a predominate theme in our Christian lives (living) was established at our conversion - we are submitters not instigators; we are responders, not initiators - our lives are to be defined as doing His bidding, not He ours
11. God is not partial in His grace - vs. 12-13
- a. The key has never been who or what we are, but Who and what He is!
- b. With God, there is not distinction between Jew and Gentile (neither has advantage with God and to what degree He is gracious)
- c. He is "bountiful" to those who "call on His name"
- (1). The idea is one of invoking a name (for aid/worship/testimony)
  - (2). These, again, are identified, and distinguished by their dependence
  - (3). Who (or what) do we look to for aid? (who/what do we really trust)
  - (4). Who/what do we give our worship? (focus of awe and affection)
  - (5). Who/what do we most seek to be identified? (testimony)
- d. He is the same Lord (Christ) over all - He makes no distinction as we do
- This is why we are not at liberty to rank and categorize others based upon our standards - this is founded in walking by sight and not by faith
- e. For anyone invoking (for the salvation of their soul) the name of the Lord Jesus will most assuredly be saved
- (1). Invoking is more than stating something
  - (2). It is **confidence** upon the name/person
  - (3). It is an **identity** with the name/person

12. So, Christ is the “objective” of the Law to everyone that believes - vs. 4
  - a. He is the One to whom it pointed to for fulfillment
  - b. This is why those “invoking” the name of the Lord are saved
  - c. It is His **work** in which their confidence is placed and not their own

D. So, having such “good news”, how will others find out about it? - vs. 14-15

1. These verses are the clarification of the need for **true** evangelism
  - a. As so clarified through chapter 9 God will work it out
  - b. But observe His method for doing so - he will use us as we use His Word!

2. This point was clarified in I Cor. 1:21

The wisdom of the world, even in its humility and morality, will always find a way to exalt man and to steal away (even if in small measure) some of God’s glory

a. “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.” (ASV)

b. The “preaching of the truth” would seem **foolishness** to the world

This is also key to remember so that we do not seek to take on “worldly methods” to forthtell the Truth. Our method must not be allowed to corrupt the message!

- “Surely there is a better way and a better message than this” they will say - its method and message will be in contradiction to the world’s wisdom (which will, in all ways, magnify man)

c. “The foolishness of preaching is not the preaching of foolishness.” RWP

- This passage must not be used to act as true fools “for the Gospel”

3. So, it may seem odd, inefficient or even (rationalizing) unfair, but it is God’s method

a. This whole idea of the (earthly) responsibility for forth-telling the Truth further clarifies our objective and need to evangelize

b. We, again, know that God will work this out, but He will use **us**!

4. Follow the true “logic” of the matter

a. How will one “invoke the name” of one they do not place their confidence?

- The goal of the message is to steer their belief properly

b. They, of course, will not believe in one of whom they have not heard

- The goal is to get the message to them to believe

c. How will they hear this message without a “herald?” (proclaimer)

- The goal is to be the **one** telling the message

d. How will there be any to proclaim without them being sent?

- The desire is to be the **one** sent (or seeking one to be sent)

We start with the “goal” so as not to lose sight of what it is. We must not be so “caught up” in delivery (method) that we lose sight of our proclamation (message)

5. Reverse the order of these statements to see the intended order

a. “The essence of Paul’s argument is seen if we put his six verbs in the opposite order: Christ sends heralds; heralds preach; people hear; hearers believe; believers call; and those who call are saved.” John Stott

b. This is God’s method (order) and it is our privilege to be a part of it

c. We, as messengers and proclaimers are most certainly flawed (in our manners and presentations) yet God will still use us and this way to demonstrate His work in conversion

We participate but we do not instigate!

6. There will be relief, joy and excitement in the **genuine** recipients - vs. 15

a. As it is written... - this is from Isaiah 52:7

b. The picture is of a herald bringing news of a won battle, a victory over an enemy, thus bringing the good news of peace (and security)

c. The feet are described as “beautiful” only because they brought him to them

- Even the “means” of how the beautiful message is brought is beautiful to the recipients!

d. This is our calling! We **get** to bring the good news of a victory over a vicious, seemingly unconquerable enemy

E. Having the right “message” does not guarantee all will heed it - vs. 16-17

1. The excited receiving of good news had just been illustrated

2. Yet, as illustrated by Israel, not all believed the “good news”

We must never determine the “success” of our presentation based upon what we see. It may appear a success and be a genuine failure and it may appear a failure only to be used of God as a success.

a. As indicated earlier, not all would see Christ as the answer but as it were a stumblingblock to their own methods or beliefs

b. This must also be understood by us also!

c. We must never see ourselves (in a perfect presentation or in the fullest sincerity) being the key to an effective “witness”

d. As illustrated in Isaiah, not all “believed” his report either

- Clearly he was called and declared God’s message without a perfect reception to it

e. The rejection of the Truth will always be our own fault, but the reception of it will always be the grace of God!

3. “A Gospel universally believed would not be God’s. Jesus said, “I m come in my Father’s name, and ye have not received me: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43). And ever so God’s messenger is known by his general rejection.” Stifler

4. The hearing of truth is of no advantage if it is not believed - Heb. 4:2

And it is not in our power to make anyone believe

a. Israel heard a message of “rest” and refused to obey (believe) it

b. Thus, the truth and the hearing of it did them no good because it was not “mixed with faith” (they did not accept it)

5. This is, of course, true in all aspects of receiving the truth

a. If we do not trust that God “really knows all things”, we will not obey

b. Our neglect or refusal of truth renders it, as it were, powerless TO US!

6. Nevertheless, faith will be “built” the same way - vs. 17

a. Faith comes by hearing (listening more than just hearing - receiving)

- It is an open, receptive, attentive hearing; it is a proper consideration of all that is being stated - poor attention is a detriment

b. But it is the object (message) of what is heard that is key

or “the word of Christ” — (1). It must be the “Word of God “ (the message of Christ)

(2). It must be of the “decree” of God (His message not another’s)

c. We must always focus on the Scripture as being the “faith builder”

It is important to note, though, that the Word is effective to those “hearing” - many will be exposed to the truth of God but will not be phased.

(1). To use just reasoning will establish the wrong authority

(2). To use just persuasion may replace/contradict the Spirit

(3). Using anything else will cause us to miss something

d. Even as believers, we should steer one another to the Scripture, to the truth of how things really are before God

F. Well, it would appear then, in light of vs. 17, that Israel/Gentiles must have not heard - vs. 18

1. The answer is clear; they heard it. most assuredly (indeed!)

2. As was the picture in Psalm 19 concerning the general revelation of God in His creation, so to the Gospel has gone out into all the world

a. Many try to reason God into the “corner” of their limited frame of reference

b. “If I can’t see evidence of the Gospel being made available then it must not be”

c. Paul mentioned the Gospel as having come to “all the world” - Col. 1:5-6

3. Too many believers allow themselves to become disheartened or discouraged by a false conclusion concerning God... such as this one

- We must remember our need for insight from Him, not He from us!

4. We should be assured that God will be righteous in all He does
  - a. Part of the intention of this passage, the previous and what is coming is to demonstrate that God is without **blame** in any of this
  - b. All who are not found “in Christ” will be to blame - we have seen the sovereign side of this message, but it must not (cannot) be used to portray God is unrighteous or immoral in what He does or has done and planned

G. God is consistent, Israel has been disobedient and obstinate -vs. 19-21

1. Remembering back to the beginning of this discussion, Paul was dealing with his burden for Israel and the **desire** for their salvation
2. So, was God inconsistent in letting (or not letting) them hear the message? - No
3. Well, maybe they heard, but did not understand His plan and saw Him as inconsistent with His covenant by extending the message to the Gentiles - vs. 19
  - a. So, some may hear (some say) and not understand the message (of the Gospel)
  - b. The example of Israel proves there was understanding with them
4. Israel was told/informed and remained obstinate before God

- a. Moses told of this in Deut. 32:21 - God was made “jealous” because of their idols (“no-gods”) and in turn would show his favor to a “no-nation”
  - God was never exclusively Israel’s (as we are also to not view Him as just ours)
- b. God would make them jealous (showing His favor to another) and angry

See Rom. 11:11-12 — c. God would use the disobedience to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles

God will not be deterred (stopped or hindered) by the rebellion (iniquity) or the failures of men!

- (1). God can and will use the evil intents and failures of others for His own good **purposes**
- (2). As with Joseph in Gen. 50:20 - The brothers were in sin and meant evil not knowing they were fulfilling God’s righteous intent/plan
- (3). The cross/crucifixion also pictures this - those setting it up had sinful intentions while still **fulfilling** God’s plan
- d. God is not to blame for our sin, but can overrule it anytime He pleases for His sovereign purposes (this is why we must no let our sin or the sin of others limit the potential of God’s power in our thoughts!)
- e. This, of course, does not make us ever seek to sin to fulfill God’s will, but just to be comforted (even in failure) that God is not stopped! - Rom. 6:1

5. Still referring to Isaiah 65:1-2 he comments on the boldness of Isaiah

- a. Isaiah was bold (daring) to share this **unpopular** truth
  - That he was very plain and clear in his message (they understood)
- b. He clarified what was already mentioned that those not looking for Him would find Him (He would be “manifest to them”)
- c. This was God’s plan all along - they heard it and understood it they just did not like the message and, at large, did not **submit**
  - Those who do not yield, by choice, are rightly condemned and judged while those who are saved by God’s hand (direct intervention) are shown absolute grace and mercy and God is found to be absolutely right in it all! (God must never be considered unrighteous)

God may appear, in our eyes and limited frame of reference, to be flawed in His approach to redemption, though here and in eternity is found to be morally and strategically perfect in it all

6. Israel is lastly portrayed as it really was - a “disobedient and obstinate people”

- a. Again, rejection will always be the fault of the rejector while acceptance (in faith) the “fault” of God and His grace
- b. Clearly, the Gospel message will be used in a two-fold manner - the salvation of some and the condemnation of others - the Jews are pictured with an offer that they will not receive by their own will and the plan of God

7. Let this account serve as an example to all
  - a. Stubbornness and disobedience always conclude in missed opportunities
  - b. A strong will to stand against God's plan/way will hurt us while His plan will continue (with or without me)
  - c. Again, we do not serve and obey God because He needs us, we serve and obey Him because it is truly in our best interest!
  - d. Resistance to God will lead us to be resistant to His people (ministers)
    - As clarified by Stephen in Acts 7:51-52 ("stiffnecked"/obstinate)
8. We are pictured (some) as being obstinate, yet God pictures Himself with open arms
  - a. We cannot comprehend the magnitude of God's sovereignty, but it is against the "framing" of God's message to us concerning Himself to picture Him as merciless and without compassion
  - b. Those "missing" God's plan will be fully to blame! - to reason otherwise is against the rest of the Gospel message (and how the message was framed)

The idea of "obstinate" (αντιλεγω) is of one who disputes and argues

#### XVI. The "Depth of the Riches Both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God" - 11:1-36

- A. The first part of chapter 11 deals with the question as to whether or not God is done (or has done away with Israel and her salvation)
  1. The focus is to prove God's control is not deterred without cooperation
  2. We are not to limit God's working to what seems evident to our eyes
  3. God's grace will be the key to how all of His will is "worked out"
  4. Thus we are not to be "boastful" looking down on those who are wrong!
- B. Do not "write off" God's working in light of contradictory "evidence" or reasoning - vs. 1-6
  1. Literally, "has God thrust out entirely His people?" - vs. 1
    - a. Has God defaulted on His covenant/plan? - No! Absolutely not!
    - b. Has God given up all the people because of the general disobedience of some?
  2. Paul was an example himself, being completely a Jew
    - And he had been a persecutor of the church (even he!)
  3. God has not rejected "His people" whom "He foreknew" - vs. 2
    - a. They were called "His people" because He had chosen them
    - b. Israel, as a nation, was the only nation "foreknew" (chosen/loved) ahead
    - c. God's plan was not altered from its path (neither could it be)
  4. The example of Elijah's complaints over what he perceived to be the situation
    - a. He stated the facts of what he observed (evidence he saw) - vs. 3
      - (1). Places of worship and sacrifice to God were torn down
      - (2). They killed God's messengers - the prophets (thus, the message)
      - (3). He met no other of like mind/heart of himself ("I am alone")
    - b. What was God's answer back to him? - vs. 4
      - (1). God had "kept" 7,000 men who had not compromised
      - (2). It was God's work, God's keeping, not Elijah's failure or God's failure
    - c. This example is so often this is a "mind set" to which we fall prey
      - (1). God's working seems to be failing from our frame of reference
      - (2). We and others are rejected because of the Truth
      - (3). We see ourselves alone and losing in a Godly struggle and begin to entertain the idea of giving up
    - d. This mind set/perspective was proven to be wrong and misguided
      - It is not the strength of our circumstances, enemies, thoughts or contradictory evidence, that we look, but to out Almighty, unhindered

5. "In the same way then.." - vs. 5

Based on these thoughts, we need not ever focus on numbers as being the key to pushing ahead. At times it would seem to be the lack of obvious numbers, along with solid truth will be the norm in God's working.

- a. As it was in Elijah's time, so it is now - there is a remnant
- b. Paul was about to here of such from James - Acts 21:20-21
- c. This "remnant" was in accordance with "God's **gracious** choice"
- d. This was based on God's grace - His "enablement" and undeserved favor
- e. As to be clarified further, this was God's plan - He will always "empower" with grace to do His work in His **time**, His way!
- d. This is why a defeatist attitude is absurd - a defeatist either admits that God has failed - maybe not in speech, but in **action**

6. Remember also what His gracious choosing means - vs. 6

- a. It is not of works - not of earned favor and not of pursuits of righteousness
  - This is proven in the **variety** of those whom God has used
- b. It (salvation by grace) is not based in self-effort, labors and toil
- c. If found in anything, from our perspective, it is seen in submission, which finds its strength in faith (God will use me as He see fit and will empower sufficiently) - I am to be characterized as truly flexible and pliable in God's hand
- d. If we find ourselves (or consider it to be so) to be in the "remnant" of faith, we must ascribe it to God's grace **alone**
- e. This not only applies to our salvation, but to the growth and how God uses us afterward. God's using us is always his grace (merit) not ours
- f. So, all "works out" in spite of opposition because of God's work and plan
  - Because of His grace, His plan will always be unstoppable!
- g. As mentioned in chapter 10, God promised (planned) a remnant and this remnant was "secured" (ensured) by God's grace

This reaffirms why pride is so wrong in the life of a believer. It is the focus on self merit and not on God's giving us this truly undeserved merit/favor.

This is part of our motive to remain faithful in His work

C. God still has a plan for Israel - vs. 7-24 (do not "write off" God's plan (working))

- 1. Based on any "remnant" being in existence by God's gracious choice, those striving (as most of Israel) for a personal righteousness will not catch up (obtain) to it
  - a. "The natural mind loves outward fetters, and is apt to forge them for itself, to stand in lieu of holiness of heart." JFB
  - b. A truly holy heart and holy perspective will be deemed impractical and impossible by a "natural" mind so alternatives will be sought or **invented**
  - c. Those "who were chosen" WILL obtain the truth - it is a "definite"
    - (1). Again, as with Elijah, we cannot fret over the "visible" or the lack
    - (2). Success will happen with or without my success or failures
    - (3). It is our "coveted" privilege to be used in this definite process!

We must never be those who endorse or even allude to self-righteousness as part of salvation nor those who "push" one's work for God over God's work in and through us!

2. God brought on a type of "blindness" and "stupor" - it served His purpose - vs. 8

- a. Isa 29:10; De 29:4 - This was God's working
- b. It is odd to consider that in our frustrations, at times, when trying to convince some of the truth we can accomplish NOTHING without the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. It has not and never will be in our hands.
- c. Remember, though, before we seek to stand critical of God, as clarified in Romans 1, all would be given, rightfully, over to their own desires, vile affections and reprobate minds were it not for God's intervention (for His own **purposes**) in the lives of some (a remnant)
- d. As God hardened Pharaoh, remember, this was Pharaoh's inclination anyway
- e. But, each of us would be so inclined were it not for God's intervention.
  - For all insight, great and small, we must give thanks to God!

See also Mt. 13:13-16 as a related idea. God's purpose (and glory) is supreme, not man's desires or glory

3. These were hardened - left to themselves to be what they are to an extreme

4. As David had said - their "table a snare and a trap"

a. The very place they come to for refreshment and sustenance be

\_\_\_\_\_ (1). A snare - an enticement to a trap (and proven to be so)

(2). A trap (as entrapping an animal) - others see and beware

b. Let this also be a "stumblingblock" - their place of nourishment be proven to be a thing which trips them up (their way is not THE way or an answer)

c. Let it also be a "just retribution" - get what they **deserve**

5. All this was predicted for Israel (prayed for by David) and its results seen today

• Do not let them "eyes to see" - a blindness as in God giving them over to a "reprobate mind" - unapproved, worthless, not "for real"

6. In spite of all this, though, God was still at work and in **full** control!

a. We must also realize that our failures do not discount God's ability to work in spite of them or even to counteract them for our good

b. Again, though, when God turns our failures around for the good, it is not because of them but in spite of them for His glory (we need not conclude that our sin or failures are more "permissible")

7. This was the plan for Israel - vs. 11

a. Did Israel "stumble" in order to "fall" - did it result in their utter falling?

(1). "May it never be" - absolutely not! - God is not done with Israel

(2). Is their stumbling over the Gospel evidence of their fall? - No!

b. But God, by their "transgression" brought salvation to the Gentiles

(1). This was God's foreordained means - He could have brought the Gospel to the Gentiles by another, but chose this as **best**

(2). In it also, Israel would become jealous - fear of "missing out"

c. God was able to "overrule" the transgression of one to the benefit of another

(1). Their failures (παράπτωμα) - "side-slips" were even used by God

(2). The sins and iniquities of others may seem to be only for the "bad" (theirs/ours/everyone's) but only almighty God can turn the situation around for His **perfect** plan and will

8. Just imagine what God will do with Israel's full restoration! - vs. 12

a. "But since their fall is the enrichment of the world, and their defeat and loss the enrichment of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness?" Wuest

b. This is the positive response of faith - the "looking on the bright side" with thoughts considering the limitless power of God

c. So, their "stumbling" was used to bring the bestowal of great riches (the Gospel) to the world, and their "deterioration" was used to bring riches to the Gentiles (all ethnicities)

d. As alluded to previously, we cannot even take the blatant sins of others and the consistent failures of others ( and the seemingly ineffective power of the Truth on others) as God not at work or as God failing in any way!

e. If things are this good at such a time and situation, imagine how good they will be when God finishes with Israel with its full restoration!

f. Clearly, some of the enemies most powerful weapons would be considered the turning away of people from the truth and "narrowing" the ranks of the "faithful." Yet, as proven, God is not deterred in the least by these most powerful of seeming victories!

What is used as a lure is danger to them - self-righteousness by the law (or self-imposed standards)

We are not "existentialists" - letting experience dictate our theology

Daniel was taken as a boy from his family, brought as a slave to a heathen land and even with all these iniquities done to him he was precisely placed and used by God

9. Part of Paul's motive was still for his people and his participation in their saving - vs. 13-14
- "But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles" - they are being "clued-in"
  - Do not forget your privileged position in knowing the truth! - it is not of merit or of debt but of Grace that we **know** the Truth
  - "Inasmuch then, as for myself, as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I do my ministry honor, if by any means, possibly, I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh, and save some of them." Wuest
  - In his commissioned ministry to the Gentiles (as he was called of God to do) he gave greatest **priority** to it (magnify it, glory in it)
    - It could have easily been seen as a belittling calling as it was difficult for most Jews to fellowship with Gentiles, let alone minister to them
  - In the proclamation of such truth, such wondrous news (Gospel) some of his fellow Jews may be "provoked to emulation"
    - That they would **want** it also! They would not want to "miss out"
  - It is key for us to take not also the importance of "magnifying" our calling in life by God. We should not allow ourselves to belittle it in light of how we deem another's work more important than our own, but glory in God's work and our chance to participate so as to make others desire it also
    - "Be not weary in well doing..." - Gal. 6:9 - our motivation is God's calling (where and with whom He has placed us) not our perception of how **others** may perceive my calling.
  - "...and save some." - not that he was referring to only "some" being saved, but that he could be privileged to do his small part of the bigger plan
    - Many who set their personal goals unrealistically high (or more likely in their own time frame) will fatigue too soon
    - Live each day and each opportunity at a time - our life, calling and our part in it are only a part of the plan, not the whole plan!
- vs. 15 — 10. If their "rejection" (loss) is the reconciling of the "world" to God what will their being the "receiving back again" of Israel be but as those brought to life from the dead?
- Clearly, with salvation comes the promise of resurrection which the Gentiles had not previously had
  - But, as illustrated by Paul, when Israel is restored, it will not be to the detriment of the Gentiles (realizing the Jews demise was used for our good) but will be as a resurrection from the dead
  - God is not limited even by the concept of one being dead - if death (our greatest known enemy on the earth) is of no match to His power, why would we limit the power and scope of His working to our limited frame of reference?
11. Remember, if the first part (the source) is set apart to and for God, that which comes from it will also be **consecrated** for God's purposes - vs. 16
- Our initial goal is the searching out of the "will" of God (God's plan)
  - Our secondary goal is the submission to His plan (God at work)
  - If the "start" of the thing is set apart (holy) for God, the result will be
    - The root cause of this process is God - the "branches" will be His work
12. In light of it being God's work, do not be **arrogant** - vs. 17-18
- Realize your fortunate position - Some of the "branches" were broken off that you could be "engrafted" into this to partake of the "rich root".
  - God would again break with what appears to be the "norm" to demonstrate it is His work, His control (as with Jacob and Esau - 9:11)

Enthusiasm (genuine) is very contagious but so is boredom.

There is a "reaping" if we do not lose heart and give-up. Quitting should not be an option in our thinking. This thinking, entertained too long, will begin to build a case and we will yield.

Remember, as Elijah needed reminding, it is God's work and though we may see evidence of "loss" His work will not suffer a single loss!

We should never fear nor resent God being gracious to another as though somehow it will lessen our blessing

God's will in action —

- c. "Though it is more usual to graft the superior cutting upon the inferior stem, the opposite method, which is intended here, is not without example." JFB
- d. God, as the Farmer, does as He pleases, even if seemingly against the "**norms**" to accomplish His purpose (this is why we do not limit Him to the norms)
- e. He did something special on our (Gentiles) behalf (what seemed out of the ordinary) so we have no "bragging rights" seeing as we were shown grace

**πτωκοι** - not those who need to work for a living, but those unable to provide any provision for themselves at all but by what they receive as beggars

- 13. We must always maintain the perspective the "poor in spirit" - Mt. 5:3
  - a. They (we) have nothing but what is **given** to them freely
  - b. We see our perspective as beggars when it comes to self-worth and being of any righteous value to God
- 14. God would use of the resources of the root (as through Abraham as God's plan) and could (and would) bring in those not of the natural descendants of Abraham to produce His fruit, fulfilling His plan (God does not need us, we need Him!)
- 15. "If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you." (RSV)
  - a. Never lose sight of your dependance, never, not for a **moment**
  - b. Self-sufficiency breeds iniquity (self-will), self-governing, self-righteousness
- 16. Do not over-analyze the method, simply focus on the "**motive**" - vs. 19-21
  - a. People often watch more what God does than they do why He does it
  - b. "You may say" that God broke off some that we may be added
  - c. Yes, practically that is what God did, but look at the facts of the matter
    - (1). We were "grafted in" because of their unbelief (as God had clarified would happen and our salvation would be the result)

We have no rightful claim to our position other than God's grace and His work

To allow impatience with others communicates we have forgotten our dependance on God's mercy and grace to which we are to be eternally grateful

For we dare not make ourselves of the number; or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (2Co 10:12)

- (2). We are "standing" as being engrafted by faith - we do not, by the illustration, normally **belong** to such a circumstance
- (3). So, do not be proud, but stand in reverential fear (awe)
- (4). This dictates how we will look upon all that are ignorant - this is our premise for patience and longsuffering with others
- d. For if God did not spare the natural branches (some of Israel) neither would we be able to take false confidence in our not being Jews!
  - (1). Too many find their security in who or what they see themselves **not** to be than in who they really are, in and because of Christ
  - (2). It is too easy to glorify our position by pointing out another in a lower position (and acting as though we can take credit)
- e. If God did not treat the "natural branches" with leniency, what would make us think we could get away without **faith**?
- Where it is directed — (1). It is our confidence, not our works, that matter most to God
- (2). Dependance on the "root" of God's making is most important!

17. Pay attention to the "farmer" of the "branches" - vs. 22-24

Who He uses and who He does not. Those who live/walk by faith are those grafted in (used)

- a. Notice it is His severity (pruning) and His graciousness that is to be our focus
- b. Writing of God's "severity" Albert Barnes states, "Here it refers to the act of God in cutting off or rejecting the Jews as useless branches; and conveys no idea of injustice, cruelty, or harshness. It was a just act, and consistent with all the perfections of God. It indicated a purpose to do that which was right, though the inflictions might seem to be severe, and though they must involve them in many heavy calamities."
- c. This is why we always assume God's **rightness** in all things

Our objectives should always be viewed as changeable and flexible in light of God's unchangeable and unchanging plan

This term "goodness" can mean kindness or usefulness or favor

Again, notice the note that the Gentile churches were engrafted contrary to nature - it was not normal, directing attention to the purpose of the Farmer not the significance of the branches

The truth of our condition should always bring confidence in God not a greater self-reliance and pride

Do not limit God by "category" of people, and not by time constraints!

- d. Do not look on life from the "I" but look upon the actions of God -It is not about our objectives being performed but His (objectives) at work
- e. We become disillusioned when focused on our **goals** over God's
- f. Frustration with God on our part is a sign of our neglecting "focus of life" in discovering His will in action and acting in obedient harmony with it

- Jonah's final opinion (frustration) on God's plan with Ninevah was irrelevant

- g. We continue in His goodness as we seek to be **used** (usefulness)
18. Personal expectations can be one of our greatest distractions from reality
- a. What we perceive (from a limited frame of reference) will always be limited
  - b. We cannot allow our emotions to rise and fall solely on what we want
  - c. So often, God overrules what we want to bring us or force us to better things that we would have **wanted** more anyway!
19. Those in unbelief will be cut off (in reference to the Gentile churches)
- Rev. 2-3
- a. They will not be used any further - as seen throughout history - even with the 7 churches of Asia (the candlestick removed from out of its place)
  - b. "For why would God spare a hollow, faithless Church that fails to appreciate ineffable mercy (Eph. 2:4,5), when He spared not "his people"? " - Stifler
  - c. Many churches, groups and organizations have been started based upon the goodness (usefulness for) of God and have gone on to the pursuit of what is useful for them **alone** - Php. 2:21 - "... seek their own..."
20. If they (some of Israel) do not continue in unbelief, God most certainly can graft them back in (as they, Israel, were originally intended) - vs. 23-24
- a. We must not be those who "write off" others - always seeking their change
  - b. Always remember and live by, "God is **able**"
  - c. It just makes sense, that if the farmer goes against nature to put in one branch, he can and will incorporate the original branches again
- D. God will finish what He started (as He always does) - vs. 25-32
1. Do not be ignorant of what was not previously known but now is - "mystery"
- a. We are informed so that we do not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (overestimating personal self-worth)
  - b. It was God's plan and grace that enlightened us, not our own "genius"
  - c. This controls our self-concept and our picture of others (the ignorant)
2. Focus solely on the work of God being performed (with expectation)
- a. Realize that "hardness" (callousness) and blindness has come only in part
    - (1). **Some** of Israel will believe (come to the faith)
    - (2). This widespread blindness/callousness is only for a time
  - b. Realize God will completely fulfill His plan with the world (Gentiles)
    - (1). "...until the fullness of the Gentiles..." - till complete/finished
    - (2). "until" signifies time and **πληρωμα** signifies a container full
    - (3). So, until the time of the Gentiles is filled/finished
    - (4). "...constitutes a definite but immense number, whom God foreknew, called, and justified in the manner previously described by the apostle." - William Shedd
  - c. We must not become **weary** in waiting to see God's work complete
    - God is always timely and completely thorough (nothing undone)
3. Realize, the nation of Israel, as a people, will be brought to salvation (future)
- a. This will be brought on by a turning away from ungodliness (irreverence)

- b. This would be God's work (word) fulfilling His covenant
- c. This will be done by means of the Deliverer (Christ) - always by faith in Him
- d. This was and will be His covenant fulfilled with them - God will always finish what He starts - He will always Keep His word and will not change His mind

- This is key theology - God is perfect and perfection cannot change because **perfection** cannot be improved upon or corrected!

- e. We can expect to change and to always be in need of **changing**
- f. God will "take away" their sins - this is done as described it will be done in Jer. 31:33,34 (practically)

This is also key with us in the "mortification" of sin

- (1). The Law is written in their hearts - it becomes their thinking
- (2). God will truly be their God - He will be known throughout

g. So remember, God will finish successfully with Israel as He does with all His word

4. View **life** and its circumstances from God's frame of reference - vs. 28-30

a. From the "standpoint" of the Gospel being given, Israel is deemed an enemy

- In their disobedience God showed mercy to the Gentiles

b. From the standpoint of the patriarchs, they are loved in light of His covenant

- In His mercy displayed to the Gentiles, He will also display mercy to Israel

c. The "gifts" and "calling" of God are irrevocable

(1). "What he promises he will fulfil; what he purposes to do, he will not change from or repent of." Barnes

(2). God does not nor will He change His mind or purposed plan

(3). The gifts (such as the Word of Truth, the "oracles of God") will not be taken away nor rendered without affect

(4). The calling of God (choosing) will not be altered in the least

d. We must always have the perspective of God's mercy to us, for as He demonstrated mercy to us, so He will again with Israel

(1). We are not at "righteous liberty" to fully "write-off" someone

(2). When we forget God's mercy to us, we fail to demonstrate mercy

e. God has literally "shut up all in unbelief" that He may demonstrate mercy

(1). With the article this would read God has shut up (as with a net)

"the all" unto unbelief that He might demonstrate mercy to "the all"

(2). God "imprisoned" all these in the "prison" of unbelief (let this

happen) with the purpose of **showcasing** His mercy

E. What a God we serve! He is above all possibility of our reasoning - vs. 33-36

1. "Paul's argument concerning God's elective grace and goodness has carried him to the heights and now he pauses on the edge of the precipice as he contemplates God's wisdom and knowledge, fully conscious of his inability to sound the bottom with the plummet of human reason and words." RWP

2. Oh the depth of the riches of God's wisdom and knowledge!!

a. When confronted with the "deeper" aspects and learning of God's working and plan, it should stir us not fatigue us! It should excite us not depress us!

b. "The apostle cries out as one astonished with this wonderful wisdom of God, which he teaches us to revere in a religious manner, and not curiously and profanely to be searched beyond the boundary of that which God has revealed unto us." GBN

c. God's wisdom and knowledge are compared to "riches" - wealth, abundance

d. It is in parallel to Psalm 19: 10 - "More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold..."

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed". - Mal 3:6

No merit in anyone, but all of grace. "The all" again, who receive God's mercy, not that "all" men are saved. - RWP

God's wisdom is unfathomable; God's knowledge is unfathomable! Who would stand in debate, criticism or irreverence before such an One?

God's purposes and methods — e. The depth of God's perspective (knowledge) and of His plan (wisdom) are beyond our ability to measure (this will then involve using faith)

3. "So many also in their wisdom dictate what God's wisdom should do or should have done. What profundity to God! What **folly** in men!" Lenski

4. His decisions/plans (judgments) are unable to be "searched out" - fully known

a. Many cannot get passed their own "why's" when it comes to God

b. Many grow bitter or discouraged with their failure to answer all the why's

c. We must know, up front, we cannot know all the "why's" and even the "what's"

This is a fundamental picture of what an idol really is - a false concept of God firmly (religiously) followed

d. Who could possibly predict God and how He would work this out? - there are those, though, who do seek to predict His working and yield themselves to despair when the "god of their **own** making" does not measure up!

5. And His ways are "untraceable" - "past finding out"

a. It is as it were, that His workings (the "route of His doings") when studied out, will still lead to what may seem to be a labyrinth (a maze)

b. No man could have ever designed such a plan and followed it so perfectly

c. Even in the depth of our intellectual studies, we are limited to faith - we see the highlights of His works but cannot determine the mass of the details of what brought them to be

The innumerable cause and effects that were necessary to be perfect in His plan are clearly beyond our comprehension

6. Who, in all of history, or time to come, has known the mind of the Lord?

a. "Second aorist active indicative of ginôskô, a timeless aorist, did know, does know, will know." RWP

b. Who can conceive the **thought** processes of God?(timeless)

7. Who has or ever could act as God's "counsellor"? - Isa. 40:13, I Cor. 2:16

a. Can there be any that has or ever could offer God advice?

b. Imperfection cannot improve on perfection, neither can it **know** it!

c. Again, many will offer their advice and become embittered when it seems ignored by God or even directly reversed!

d. We cannot tell God what He should do or what He should have done

It would be the truest of arrogance to approach God in such a manner

8. Does God owe us anything? - vs. 34

a. Who has ever given anything to God and now God is indebted? - No one!

b. Has anyone ever given something to God that God had not already given?

Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26,28 — • All that we have in all of creation is already God's (what He has given)

c. We have nothing but what we have been graciously given by God

(1). Many are unthankful because they do not realize what was given

(2). Many are unthankful because they expected what they received

(3). Many are unthankful because they treasure the gift more than the Giver (loving the creation more than the Creator)

(4). Many are unthankful because they simply **forget** to be grateful

"This saying overthrows the doctrine of foreseen works and merits." GBN

Luke 17:11-19 - an example of the majority not expressing thankfulness

9. The profound difference prepositions make on our life outlook - vs. 36

a. All things are "of Him" - all comes from Him

b. All things are "through Him" - He created all things (they exist because of Him)

c. All things are "to Him" - all things are for His purposes

d. All things were created and have as their fundamental purpose the glory of God

10. Thus, our life focus is "to whom be all glory for ever!"

a. This sets the next verses to come (this and the previous are referred to in the "therefore" of 12:1)

b. The concept of offering self as a living sacrifice will not seem unreasonable

XVII. Our Rational Service - Rom. 12:1-2

A. "I urge you therefore..." - a personal call to service (sacred service)

1. Based upon what has just been stated - "therefore"

- a. That God is sovereign - all things from Him, through Him and for Him
- b. That all is for God's glory - this is our fundamental **purpose** in life
- c. As God instructed Baruch in Jer. 45:4-5 that all was His work and He does what He pleases (for this is perfect). Based on this we are not to be seeking "great things for **ourselves**"

2. Based upon the "compassions" (mercies) of God

- a. God's mercy has been demonstrated full to us - we owe all!
- b. "Christian ethics finds its motive in the sense of the divine mercy in Christ, and the consciousness of redemption; the motive of pagan ethics is prudential only; either that of fear, or of self-interest." G.T. Shedd
- c. We seek to serve not out of fear of God's judgement not out of somehow earning more favor (grace) but out of eternal gratitude

οικτιρμων - pity, not based on merit but on compassion alone

- 1 Cor. 6:20— d. We see ourselves as though "bought with a price" and the natural result being that we "glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are His"

B. Present (yield) your bodies - as in offering them up sacrificially

1. Same word as in Rom. 6:13 for "yield" - to offer up, stand **beside** offering

- As in acknowledging the rightful ownership for your body is God's as we stand by as simply stewards of our bodies which are His to use as He pleases

2. These, in contrast to the O.T. sacrifices are "living sacrifices"

- a. It is not in our taking our lives but **giving** them over to another
- b. "...it was set apart to the service of God; and he who offered it released all claim on it, and submitted it to God, to be disposed of at his will. This is the offering which the apostle entreats the Romans to make; to devote themselves to God, as if they had no longer any claim on themselves; to be disposed of by him; to suffer and bear all that he might appoint; and to promote his honour in any way which he might command. This is the nature of true religion." Barnes
- c. It is a sacrifice made while living, daily - it is our once for all offering with the expectation of its full use all the days God gives me life
- d. These are characterized as "living" as opposed to dead

Why the body? The spirit/soul is already His and the body contains the remnants (deeds) of the old nature in need of mortification (being rendered useless) - Rom 6:6

- We are active, vigorous in our service, not as passive or barely alive!

3. These sacrifices are to be "holy" and "acceptable" (well-pleasing) to God

- a. Holy being what is specially set apart for God - not of my worst but of my best
- b. Not of my left-overs but of my "firstfruits", my prime
- c. He is not served with "sinful" or selfish purposes and ends - we are to strive for "blameless" and pure service for God (scrutinized by God, self and others)
- d. We seek sacrificial service in what God determines/clarifies is well-pleasing to Himself, not what I or others dictate is well-pleasing to God

- Often, the "traditions" of men become replacements for what is **truly** "acceptable" before God in His service

4. For this is our "rational sacrificial service" (or "spiritual service")

- a. It is the foundation of our thinking and it is our "reasoning"
- b. "I appeal to you, fellow Christians, by the mercies of God, to give your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, and so worship Him as thinking beings." - The New Testament in the Language of Today

λογικος - "rational" as in contrast to the sacrifice of animals who could not reason or consider their sacrifice

God is to be adored, awed, worshipped and served, not because we FEEL like it but because we learn of Who He is and what He has done. It is based in truth which inspires our emotions, not the opposite - emotions making truth!

- c. This is the essence of our “worship” - λατρεία - “rendering religious homage”
- d. It is literally our “**thinking** service” - reasoned out
- e. “Blind devotion, that has ignorance for the mother and nurse of it, is fit to be paid only to those dunghill-gods that have eyes and see not. Our God must be served in the spirit and with the understanding.” Matthew Henry
- f. This is why we worship/serve Him according to knowledge given by Him
- g. If we are not learning of/about Him, thinking on Him, we are not and will not be **truly** serving and worshipping Him

C. And do not be “being conformed” but be “being transformed” - vs. 2

1. Both statements are present passive imperatives - we are commanded not to allow/permit the first bit to be allowing/permitting the second
  - On one hand we are resisting and on the other we are submitting
2. DO NOT be submitting to “being fashioned like” the world - lit. “the age or time”
  - a. “..we do not take other men’s opinions or conduct as a rule for life, but that we wholly renounce this world, and set before us as our mark the will of God as is manifested and revealed to us in his word.” GBN
  - b. Do not be “pressured” into the **mold** of the age in which you live
  - c. Time comes and goes - we cannot afford to live for the time - fads, fashions, trends, popularities and the like change; we cannot afford to conform to them, not just because they are fleeting, but because they contradict the eternal unchangeables
3. We are to be **being** “radically and universally changed” - transformed
  - a. This does not have the idea of being “simply amended” (added to)
  - b. We are becoming something of a different sort/kind - old things “passed away”
  - c. The truest idea of this is for us to “**Become what you are**”
  - d. “Redeemed by Christ, Christians no longer stand in this aeon but in the coming aeon.” - TDNT
  - e. We are transformed, of a different “model” in that we do not live for time, this time, but for **eternity**
  - f. II Cor. 3:18 - “The point that Paul is making is that we shall not lose the glory as Moses did. But that is true if we keep on beholding or keep on reflecting (present tense).” RWP

II Tim. 4:10 - Demas “forsook” Paul having loved his present world/age/time (same word)

Societies will always have pressures that will press us to contradict God rather than conform in appearance, thoughts and will

And all of us, with faces from which the veil is lifted, seeing, as if reflected in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into his likeness, from glory to glory, as it is given by the Lord, the Spirit. (TCNT)  
II Cor. 3:18

D. This transformation takes place **by means of** “renewing the mind” - instrumental case

1. “..but be transformed by the complete change that has come over your minds.” - TCNT
2. We are “what we think”; what we meditate upon - know the true thoughts of a person and you truly know the person
  - a. External changes will come, but external alone is **hypocrisy**
  - b. The change, transformation, occurs in our thinking - νοῦς - “intellect; thinking”
3. This transformation (while on earth) will occur (is occurring) by means of a change in perspective, desire, thought habits, new curiosities, drives/goals/ambitions all affected and controlled (as if taking us over (passive)) with the Truth of who we are and What God has done for us by Christ
4. They that are “after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit” - Rom 8:5

E. This renewing of the mind to transform us is for the purpose of discovering God’s will

1. That you may “prove” - to test to see genuineness - δοκιμάζω
2. First, that God’s will is “good, acceptable, and perfect” in all ways
  - a. We discover this because this is what we do - we see it first hand

b. This is what we prove - test out for ourselves - The will of God is always "good" and well-pleasing and thoroughly complete!

- 3. That you can be renewing your thoughts/perspectives steadily with this cyclical process
  - a. Our mind (thinking/opinion) is altered as we see first-hand that God's will is good (the right), well-pleasing to us and God, and is **perfect**
  - b. As I learn more of this, I sacrifice more of myself proving these truths more
  - c. The whole of our life then becomes discovery of God's will as it was intended

It is less the "discerning" of the will of God and more the "discovery" of what is already there!

- Not discovering some obscure possibility that God may have for me, but being daily reassured that His will is always at work and that it is only my **perspective** (by discovery) that needs altering

d. It is as having a powerful tool at hand needing only to be proven by use

- 4. It carries the same idea our Lord stated in John 7:17 - "If any one has the will to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching is from God, or whether I speak on my own authority." (TCNT)

Doing God's will by submitting to what He has given me for the day proves to me His rightness. His truth is truth with or without my belief, but obedience/subservience makes it truth to me!

a. "A principle of immense importance, showing, on the one hand, that singleness of desire to please God is the grand inlet to light on all questions vitally affecting one's eternal interests, and on the other, that the want of this, whether perceived or not, is the chief cause of infidelity amidst the light of revealed religion." JFB

b. Again, the key is submission, not **assertion** - God initiates, we respond

- 5. Many are not interested in seeing God's will in action because they speculate based upon what they see more than by what they have learned of the truth

- 6. "Could the imagination of man picture a situation before any creative act of God was wrought, when God, as it were, had before Him an infinite variety of possible plans and blueprints from which to choose - each and every one of which represented a possible program of divine action as far reaching and elaborate as the one now being executed - it would be reasonable and honoring to God to conclude that the present plan as ordained and as it is being achieved is, and in the end will prove to be, the best plan and purpose that could have been devised by infinity wisdom...the present plan is as perfect as the Author." L.S. Chafer

Walking by faith versus walking by sight

Our joy, contentment and purpose is found in the proving, first-hand, this fact for ourselves

The key is the giver of the gift, His purposes, not the gift itself

### XVIII. Focus on God as Giver not We as Earners - vs. 3-8

A. We are "members all of one body" - The picture to be used of our **unified** work

- 1. We are each a part of the process not the **whole** of the success
- 2. These verses are to clarify our fortunate part in the work, not our glory

B. Consider yourself properly before God - vs. 3

- 1. Even the admonition Paul is about to give is clarified as coming by God's grace
- 2. His apostolic authority was not of his own but of God's grace
- 3. With each of us, then, we are not to think of yourselves too highly (inappropriately)
  - a. "Not to have high thoughts beyond what is right to think"
  - b. It does not command self-abasing thinking but properly governed thinking
  - c. Too high is when we go beyond the scope of what God has given us

I have received a proper allotment from God for His work.

- 4. Pride comes when we take credit for gifts, talents, strengths, positive tendencies
  - a. All we have has been given to us - this leaves **zero** tolerance for pride
  - b. What "measure" of the faith we have was given to us by God

Our pride and boasting is the giver of graces (gifts) not in ourselves as the recipients of them

- 5. Literally, think so as to demonstrate sound judgment
- 6. This is a first key point in the renewing of the mind - a true self-concept
- 7. As God has "**appointed** you in your lot in life, so walk" - I Cor. 7:17

See Also I Cor. 12:11

8. The focus is on God as the giver - use your portion as He has given you  
• Focus more on the Giver and His desires than on the gift(s) and our desires

9. There is also a belief that this is in reference to “the measurement of faith”

(a). That we view what is given and what has been done by faith as the

standard, not our opinion or just intellect as the standard

(b). It is our confidence (faith) in this being God’s work which keeps us on track and contented with our part (small as it may be)

C. We serve “the body” not our individual agendas, goals or desires - vs. 4-5

1. “...he does backwardly, and unprofitably, and also to the great disservice of others, wearying himself and others, who passes the bounds of his calling...” GBN

\_\_\_\_\_ a. This often occurs as we allow human interests and goals to become our focus

b. One “gift” or “portion” is ranked above another - this is wrong for those that “have” and those that “have not”

c. To begrudge the distribution of gifts, callings and responsibilities, either personal or from an objective standpoint is to call God’s judgement into question

2. The analogy of the human body and the unified parts working together

a. We are not a body of “competing” parts as this would be destructive

b. We do not all have the same “function” - mode of practice (we all have the same general purpose of God’s glory, but we differ in our practical (earthly) callings of fulfilling God’s purposes)

3. The through picture described in I Cor. 12:12-27

a. One cannot compare themselves to another part and determine that they are not a part of the body because they are not performing the same task

b. Jealousy and envying are not healthy in the “church”

c. One “body part” cannot say to the other that it is not needed - this is the determination of the “Head” - the whole of the body serves (or is to serve) at the directives of the Head, which is Christ

d. We must be careful not to “rate” or “rank” the body’s members

- Some of our less “seemly” parts are essential - the heart, liver, kidneys and such. Though we do not “show them off” and work at making them appear better (or even to appear at all) before others, we place immense value on them - I Cor. 12:23

★ e. We do the “body” a great disservice when we showcase one task above another!

f. If one member suffers, the others are to as well - as we are a unit

4. We are literally “members one of another” - we are related in “the body”

D. We, as differing parts of the whole, have differing gifts by God’s grace - vs. 6-8

1. Understand that “gifts” are just that; God’s specific bestowment of grace

a. They are His gifts intended for His purposes

b. There is no such things as a “misuse” of one of God’s gifts

c. If one believes that are misusing a gift, they are simply sinning or in error

(1). This is tantamount to what Adam said, “The woman you gave me...”

(2). We must be careful to never place any blame on God for our wrong

d. When God graces us with an ability we must acknowledge it as from Him

2. We surrender (sacrifice) ourselves to these “callings” of God on our lives

a. These “graces” more define our lives than do our earthly talents/gifts

b. The sacrifice of ourselves, the usage of the graces God has given to obey and serve all lead to prove the perfection of God’s will in all things!

This term for measure was used this way (as a standard of measurement) in Rev. 21:17

We will often choose man’s methods, ingenuity and strengths when we stray from God’s purposes and pursue our own

So often the impact of a seemingly lesser body part or function is unappreciated till it is suffering, lacking or missing in the functioning of the body as a whole

A body part acting independent of the Head is a sign of something wrong and is freakish

Many “parts” get more attention but this does not mean that they are of greater importance

3. These gifts are “differing” (varying) - diverse - We differ, not for the purpose to be distinct, but to be diverse in our common work and calling

4. So, if we have the gift of “prophecy” prophesy in proportion to the faith ( which is ours)

See I Pet. 4:10-11 - as “good steward of the manifold grace of God”. If we speak we are to “speak the oracles of God...” not our words, opinions as our authority

This one builds, challenges, convicts and confronts with the Truth of our faith

What they speak/share must be “analogous” with the Truth as one truth must not contradict another - look at what is taught in light of the whole of Scripture!

- a. The prophets were those who either foretold the future, spoke for God under inspiration, or those who were known as generally **forthtelling** the Truth of God which would seem to be the usage here in light of the next phrase
- b. Those gifted with the insight into God’s Truth are to **forthtell** it in direct correspondence with the “faith” - our faith we have in the Truth
- c. Before the New Testament writings, there were those inspired by the Spirit to speak the Truth, as God did with Paul, Peter, John and the like
- d. Now, with the whole of Scripture, our insight is found in it or compared to it
- e. As the term is used in I Cor. 14, it is for the edifying (building) of the body
- f. “Let him that preaches set all the faith he hath on work, to impress the truths he preaches upon his own heart in the first place. As people cannot hear well, so ministers cannot preach well, without faith. First believe and then speak...” MH

5. If gifted with “ministering”, then minister! - vs. 7

a. This is service of any kind to “the body”

b. It’s the same concept as that of a “deacon” - **διακονία** (as in Acts 6)

(1). The idea is not of ruling, but of serving

(2). The idea is of ministry of any kind, with the practical or with Truth

c. The “drive” is to “get things done” - take care of seen necessities

d. This gifting is more likely not to be seen by groups but by individuals

• It is “behind the scenes” done for the eyes of God

e. Their insight will be the needs of others or the “church” as part of the body

f. Spotting/discerning a need is an opportunity, not a burden! - it is by God’s grace that we discern or learn of another’s true needs

6. If gifted in teaching, teach! (instruct)

a. This is instruction of any kind (weather deep or basic)

b. The skill appears to be in how the Truth is imparted (To be understood)

• By clarification and explanation (making it learned) - as making the Truth apart of another’s thinking (true understanding)

c. The idea from its root is to cause others to learn

(1). This, of course, requires the bearer of such grace to learn

(2). They must understand before they can impart

d. These, in the service of the church, were to be given honor - I Tim. 5:17

• They “labor in the word and doctrine”

e. It is the learning of and understanding the Truth which builds faith

(1). The gift is not one of persuasion but impartation

(2). It may come in a variety of presentations, not just public speaking

(3). It may be seen in writing, one on one, or in the formulation of curricula for the learning of the teachings of Scripture

(4). It is key to note, though, that a teacher will never rise above the level of his “source” - learning is a prerequisite to teaching - learning must never stop, so these are gifted in their pursuit of the Truth and then in giving it out clearly, precisely and accurately

It is not the recognition or appreciation which drives them, but the urgency of the need, no matter the “ranking” of the need

This ability is required of the “bishop” and the “servant of the Lord” - I Tim. 3:2; II Tim. 2:24

Writing, illustration, counselling, discipling are various forms of teaching when performed by giving and clarifying of the Truth

These will also be scrutinizers of what is taught realizing authority is in Truth, not opinion or tradition

7. If gifted with exhorting, then exhort - vs. 8

The term παρακαλεω is the term used of the Holy Spirit in John 16 where He is called the "Comforter".

- a. This is literally a "call-along-sider" - they call others to come near
  - (1). They are not shy or they are gifted to conquer it
  - (2). They call others to come near, ultimately, to the Truth - as so well defined, protected and clarified by the teachers and prophets
- b. These are **motivators**, admonishers and confronters
- c. These would be those who counsel and encourage - challengers
  - (1). They are gifted at dealing with individuals to either challenge and motivate them to action/obedience or to console in the face of grief
  - (2). These also would be those gifted at aiding others in conquering fear
- d. When called to exhort, they use the **Truth** as the guide

8. If gifted with the ability to give, do it with "singleness" (of focus)

Both are distracting - they steer the eye (focus) from the singular purpose of meeting the need that God has enabled them to meet

- a. This is to be taken at face-value - it is one giving (imparting towards needs)
- b. It is literally one "sharing" or distributing of an abundance
- c. This is to be done with singleness of purpose and **focus**
  - (1). Not done to be seen of men - Mt. 6:1
  - (2). Not done with partiality or prejudice (liberality)
    - Also involving no preference for self over the other
- d. So, whenever graced with the ability to meet a need, stay focused!

9. If gifted to lead, lead with diligence

The urgency of responsibility

1 Pet. 5:3 - not as lords but as examples

- a. This is one who literally "stands before" others - overseeing
  - This is not just "ruling" in or at "church" but in one's household or even at ones vocation
- b. Those placed in a position of authority should be bound to be "diligent"
  - (1). The main meaning of the word is "**speed**" or "haste"
  - (2). Do not be slack or "putting off" till later what has been given
- (3). Again, any who "rules" or leads should never see themselves as "lords" over the flock but always as servants (gifted for the task)

10. Those gifted to show mercy, do so with "cheerfulness"

It is always mixed with something else - self-love, ungodly fear or for recognition

- a. These are they in the position to show compassion (pity)
- b. It is seeing another in light of their **need** not in their status/standing
  - (1). They are given the ability to see the other's genuine need
  - (2). They are given, by the God's Spirit, a compassion for another
- c. Unadulterated mercy (compassion) is foreign to sinful man
- d. These who have opportunity to show pity/compassion should do so with a cheerful disposition (gentle, gracious, funny, thoughtful)
  - (1). Not begrudging their **insight** and the feeling of obligation
  - (2). Not becoming embittered at the tragic circumstances they see

E. How many gifts do we have?

- 1. The popular answer is "one" but this is not so dictated by this passage or by I Corinthians 12

I Cor. 12:11 - "...distributing individually just as He wills." - present middle indicative - He is distributing - there is no reason to take this in the predetermined sense

- a. Many presuppose this because of the body analogy and that as each is a comparable part, so each is one of the gifts
- b. It is interesting to note that "present active" tense of some of these verbs
- c. The idea is that one who "is teaching" or one who "is exhorting" or "giving"
- 2. It is more normal to see this as those exercising a particular gift at a particular **time** (or period of time) in differing circumstances

There is not to be pride in ourselves but gratefulness to participate!

- 3. It may be true, by our experience, that we seem to “have use” of a particular virtue of the Spirit more than others, but we must not be guilty to limit our perception of God’s spirit at work in us in an exclusive way (as the Scripture does not indicate)
  - a. As a father has one main function, needs **all** the gifts to fulfill it properly
  - b. We are one member of “the body” but will need these graces to “do our part”

4. So, when being called upon to be used of God to...

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Represent | a. Forthtell His revelation, keep it analogous with the Faith (which is ours)      |
| Serve     | b. Minister, then seize the opportunity given by God - do it!                      |
| Clarify   | c. Teach, then use God’s grace to make it clear (build with the Truth)             |
| Motivate  | d. Exhort, then encourage and challenge as God has given opportunity               |
| Impart    | e. Give, then meet the revealed need with focus on the thrill of being used of God |
| Guide     | f. Lead, then be urgent to fulfill the God-given responsibility effectively        |
| Feel      | g. Pity, then with a gracious/cautious approach to the hurting                     |

There is nothing to suggest that this must be taken to say that these gifts are singularly given, once for all, all throughout life, but seem more to indicate that each is given appropriately at the needed time

- 5. Each of these varying gifts is given in accordance to the grace given to us - vs. 6
  - a. They are of God and in proportion to the needed grace at any given time
  - b. A variety of functions (members) have access, each to a variety of gifts
    - God’s **placement** or calling will dictate the needed gift(s)

### XIX. The Active Affects of Understanding the Truth - 12:9-21

A. Allow/determine “love” to be genuine, without pretense - vs. 9

Manners, politeness and tact all have their place, but this should not determine the depth of what we would consider our “love”.

- 1. Literally, ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυποκριτος - “The love not hypocritical”
  - a. The love we have is not to be characterized as “play acting” (pretending)
  - b. We are not to be as those on a **stage** or as performers
  - c. This is ἀγάπη love (selfless), not just friend love (needing reciprocation)
- 2. How is our love made genuine?
  - a. What was the beginning concept of this passage? - look at verse 1
  - b. The urging to do what would be stated was based upon their new **knowledge** of God, His graciousness in light of His limitless power
  - c. This is the genuine affect of learning Truth! - it must change us if we truly **understand** what we have learned
  - d. My love is sincere when I understand the goodness of God - it will be hypocritical when I do not accurately understand the situation
  - e. My love of God will be genuine when I get to truly know Him (doctrine)
  - f. My love of others will be genuine when I see them and myself in light of the Truth
    - Pride (excessive self love) is a deterrent to genuine love - the Truth demonstrates my total reliance upon God’s goodness and love

This is to be the expected result of learning the “deeper things of God.”

See self and others in light of the Truth - this produces a genuine atmosphere of Love for others

B. Actively “abhor” evil and actively “cling” to what is good - vs. 9

- 1. Literally to “detest intently” or shy away from what is detrimental/damaging (evil)
  - a. The essence of evil is anything that is anti God - this is what defines it
  - b. We are to “be being detesting” what is hurtful (because it is against God)
- 2. How is it we come to detest what is evil?
  - a. Again, it is the Truth - my growing knowledge of God and His greatness and graciousness, changes what I love as well as what I detest
  - b. An infant, in their ignorance, may eat something detestable to an adult, because the child does not know the truth of what they are placing in their mouth
  - c. The more I learn of God the more my “tastes” change - because of a renewing of my mind (and perspectives) I cannot love what I used to and soon come to find former likes something I can no longer “stomach”

As many will like a person for their externals until they come to see who or what they really are

We will cling to what we love. We will love because of what we learn of the object of our affection. We will learn of this object by "communication" - learning Who God is which stirs in me love, awe and loyalty

3. Cling (be glued) to what is "good" - properly "stuck" covered with the correct "adhesive"
- a. As being actively detesting evil we are active in clinging to the good
  - b. This would be the moral good, the social good, and the good in the sponsoring and maintaining of our fellowship with God
  - c. The goal is a "glued heart" clinging, by affection, to what is truly right/best
  - d. Actively, we seek to use "adhesives" to keep our focus and heart proper
    - (1). Worldly distraction stir in us wrong priorities taking away valuable energies to be spent on only the temporal
    - (2). When our affections are involved, it will act like "glue" - for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." - Mt. 6:21
  - e. The best "adhesive" is, again, the Truth - I will be drawn to what is right by studying and knowing the Truth - of Who God is and What He has done
  - f. It can also illustrate our disciplines and imposed obligations to the "good"
    - (1). I self-impose restrictions and obligations to keep myself thinking and doing what is morally and socially right
    - (2). My motive is not self-sanctification, but one of necessary focus

C. Demonstrate true family love to each other - vs. 10

- 1. With brotherly love "be devoted", "kindly affectioned" to each other
  - a. The true order of the wording is, "In brotherly love to one another loving fervently..." - illustrating the concept of our relationship
  - b. The term "φιλοστοργοι" is used only this time in the NT - the first half is affection, as a friend, and the second is that of family love
- 2. This goes far beyond the concept of we calling each other "brother" and "sister"
  - a. We deem this to truly be the case - we are family, and a close one at that!
  - b. The truth of our relation to God through Christ places us here - the better we understand and acknowledge this truth, the more it becomes who we are
  - c. We have been through so much together - which, with our earthly families, causes an inseparable bond and a strong partiality
- 3. The concept is that we have a deep, inset love for each other causing us to act in accordance with the strongest affection the earth knows - family love
  - a. This is the strongest of natural affections we have in this world
  - b. A parent with a child knows this - their drive for that child's good, protection, joy, fulfillment and success in all things
- 4. This makes the next phrase, "in honor preferring one another" make clear sense
  - a. A good parent does not think twice on this concept
  - b. A good parent does not resent when their child is "promoted" - they would have it this way over their own promotion
  - c. This is a good illustration of this concept - it should not be a struggle
  - d. The struggle will be in the realizing of this family bond we have with each other
- 5. We seek to place other before ourselves
  - a. "Thus in showing mutual respect and honour, they were to strive to excel; not to see which could obtain most honour, but which could confer most, or manifest most respect." Barnes
  - b. It is the same mind as our Lord in Php. 2 - Made of "no reputation", "emptied himself", "became obedient" - It was God's work
  - c. As we learn and understand the controlling work of God in all things we trust His exalting and humbling acts as perfection

As the love of parents for the children or in describing a close family affection

We would rather be together than with any other

We are promotional agents for each other!

I Pet 4:8 - love with a "fervent love"

D. Do not be "slothful" when it comes to being "diligent" - vs. 11

Procrastination eats up valuable time and provides missed opportunities

1. Literally, don't be slow to be fast (with speed)
  - a. Work at being energetic not allowing lazy or procrastination to overtake us
  - b. If we are not conscious of our tendency to laziness we will be caught in it
2. We are to be those "boiling" in spirit - **focused** fervency
  - a. Always (present) aware of the need to be energetic in my thoughts
  - b. Driven by the **urgency** of the "work" God provides daily
  - c. This is genuine when we are excited at the thought of Whose work we are allowed to participate in
3. All energetic motivation and fervency is wasted if not truly doing the Lord's work
  - a. We are "slaves" (δουλεωντης) living to perform His will, not ours
  - b. In all we do, vocationally, goal-oriented and religiously this is to be our focus
4. The truth of what God has done and Who He is will drive/produce my energies
  - a. Lies, watered-down truths and the like **rob** us of energies and motive
  - b. It is our spiritual/mental food to provide energy for true living - no one wants to expend the bulk of their energies/life on a wasted cause

We work hard to eat and live but we will fatigue or hate work of any sense if our focus is not upon our real Boss!

E. Living/demonstrating an unstoppable hope - vs. 12

Rom. 5:2 - we have peace with God, the foundation to our expectant hope

1. "in the hope rejoicing; in the tribulation enduring; in the prayer persevering;" (YLT)
2. Our "rejoicing" is found in our hope and our hope is founded in the **Truth**
  - a. It is the expectant state of our awareness of our coming glorious state freed from the presence of sin (this is the assured victory in which we rest!)
  - b. It is the accumulated acts of our position that cause rejoicing knowing that it was performed by Almighty God and cannot be altered by finite man
  - c. This rejoicing in hope is one of the "**antidotes**" to slothfulness

3. With this hope as our focus, we are "patient in tribulation"

- a. We are able to "stay under the pressure" realizing its temporality
- b. The world with its "tribulations" will always be trying to "crush" us
- c. This is the "hope" that "maketh not ashamed" because it will be found worthy  
This is not the hope that we will not face the tribulations but an assurance that WHEN we face them (expecting them) we will be able to endure them
- d. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed. You will never be taken by surprise."
- e. We are in a privileged group when in tribulation - Heb. 12:1 (witnesses)

1 John 5:4

- .."and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."
- a. We are able to "stay under the pressure" realizing its temporality
  - b. The world with its "tribulations" will always be trying to "crush" us
  - c. This is the "hope" that "maketh not ashamed" because it will be found worthy  
This is not the hope that we will not face the tribulations but an assurance that WHEN we face them (expecting them) we will be able to endure them

Shame would be placing hope in that which will ultimately let us down

Lloyd-Jones

4. This is all sustained as we are "devoted to prayer"

- a. Our Lord warned - "Men ought always to pray and not to faint" - Lu. 18:1
  - Prayer, talking/conversing with God strengthens our heart/resolve
- b. As a child, when afraid, will keep talking with their parent - the assurance of the parent's presence is a comfort and provides courage (encouragement)
- c. To persevere in prayer is needed because prayer is...
  - (1). Communication with God (acknowledging His presence)
  - (2). How/when we **ask** of things from God
  - (3). A mental and verbal surrender of our will to God's
  - (4). Our agreement with God verbally/mentally concerning His truths
  - (5). Our acknowledgment of our dependence on Him
  - (6). Our bringing of **frustrations** to God (Psalms)
  - (7). Our boasting/thankfulness for His limitless power and grace
- d. So much of prayer (on our part and why we do it) is for steady focus

Since You are all-powerful I ask for strength. Since You are all-knowing I seek Your wisdom.

F. Sharing in the needs of the “saints” while pursuing the “love of strangers” - vs. 13

So often we avoid truly sharing by strictly “giving from a distance” - this is only part of the “contribution” - God would have us give of ourselves/hearts

It communicates that we will not always be able to but that this is our pursuit at all times

The truth of our situation before God makes us this way when in the forefront of our thinking

1. Contributing/distributing to needs - the deficiencies of the others

- a. It does not mean to just take a collection for
- b. It means to share in the necessity - not just giving to , but bearing with
- c. It is often translated “communicating” with - this is key as many needs and pressures go beyond the physical and into the mental/emotional
- d. Often, the hardest pain of lacking is the disregard of others
  - Same idea as Gal. 6:2 - “bear one another’s burdens” - fulfill Christ’s law
- e. Our “preference” is to the needs of the “saints” - those God set apart
  - These are all they that are in Christ (set apart by God’s hand)

2. Striving to be hospitable - gracious (friendly) to all we meet

- a. The idea is a “fondness” towards meeting those we do not know
  - As mentioned earlier, it is mainly directed at the “brethren”
- b. Prejudice (pre-judging) a person is always wrong - our misperception based upon limited information may cause us to miss opportunity
- c. Christ illustrated this in Mt. 25:31-40 - when coming to the aid of a stranger (one of “these brothers of Mine”) even the least, we do it to Him
- d. Many, in selfishness and pride, neglect and shun strangers forgetting that we also were as offensive strangers to God when He showed mercy

3. So often the opposite “spirit” is present when we are “poised for offence”

- a. We are often guilty of not placing a high value on those whom God created
  - We look on them as God’s creations not how they affect us!
- b. We must also see others (even “strangers”) as having been placed by God

G. Proper response to “persecution” from any source - vs. 14

1. It is ignorant of us to think we will not or should not face persecution

- a. II Tim. 3:12 - They that “will to live Godly” will face it - if it is our desire (just desire) to be more Godly it will be the “nature” of things that others will stand opposed to such a pursuit
- b. Mt. 10:25 - “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?”
- c. I Thes. 3:3 - “that no one be moved by these afflictions. You yourselves know that this is to be our lot.” (RSV)
- d. Php. 1:29 - “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”

These accusations were from the religious leaders

2. Our response? - “Bless them” - lit. speak good of them

- a. The first idea of this is to not “retaliate” (curse not) but seek gracious words and thoughts (control thinking and words will be controlled)
- b. The concept is not flattery or patronizing but returning their “meanness” with gracious, building statements/responses
- c. Be always seeking their betterment, never their destruction! - even in the face of the worst of treatment to ourselves and others, we must not seek their eternal destruction
- d. Our theology tells us that God has control and if He allows the suffering, there is a purpose/plan for and in it
  - Is this not God’s treatment of us as His enemies? - Rom. 5:7-8
- e. Even David acknowledged God’s sovereignty in all things when he viewed his enemy in light of God’s purpose - II Sam. 16:5-14

Always seek to build (even challenge properly) the persecuter, not to destroy them (the person)

Paul, as Saul, would have seemed like a likely recipient of condemnation from the early Church, but God was not finished with him.

## H. Be empathetic with each other - vs. 15

### 1. "Rejoice with rejoicing ones" - sincerely glad with and for them

- a. Many find this a struggle as they deal with **envy**
- b. It is difficult to genuinely celebrate with another when focused on self
  - Thinking "How can I celebrate considering my situation."
- c. Php. 2:4 - "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
- d. Genuine, empathetic joy comes when we see it from God's perspective
  - (1). He has set one up (encouraged)
  - (2). We are all **members** of "one body" - vs. 4-5
  - (3). When one of us is blessed, all of us are truly blessed!
- e. Do not play a part in the removal of an encouragement of God on another

Also, if we do not love others, we will be more apt to resent them when they are blessed because we are self-focused

Those living for constant self-blessing will be uninterested in the blessings (or the need of blessings) of others

### 2. Grieve with those grieving - seek to share the pain - Feel along with

- a. Often, not only is this the only thing we can do, it is the best we can do
- b. I Cor. 12:26 - when one suffers we all suffer, when one is honored we all are
- c. It is key, so that we do not seek to avoid the grieving...
  - (1). That we are not obsessed with our own as to only want others to share in the load while we refuse to share in theirs
  - (2). That we remember God's endless supply of mercy and grace

So that we do not entertain thoughts of being "drained" and use it as excuse to avoid the hurting

### I. Treat others as you would want to be treated - vs. 16

- 1. "Think of, that is, regard, or seek after the same thing for each other; that is, what you regard or seek for yourself, seek also for your brethren. Do not have divided interests; do not be pursuing different ends and aims; do not indulge counter plans and purposes; and do not seek honours, offices, for yourself, which you do not seek for your brethren; so that you may still regard yourselves as brethren on a level, and aim at the same object." Barnes
- 2. "Be of the same mind" - think the same way
  - a. Unified on **Truth** not just for unity's sake
  - b. The basis of our unified thinking is the Truth - Eph. 4:2-6
- 3. Knowing, now, our position and how we got there, this would seem more normal!
- 4. Literally, do not "exercise the mind" on the pursuit of **lofty** things
  - a. We are often overtaken in the pursuits of our careers and ambitions that others become nuisances more than "family"
  - b. When position, rank and status become important, we begin to "rank" others in their "lot in life"
- 5. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; **knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.**" I Pet. 3:9

Our motivation, our energy!  
The Truth assures us of this.

### 6. "Yield to, be led by" that which is humble/lowly (Be content with the lowly)

If we look to the "great things" of this world to accomplish godly goals we will be truly "denying the power thereof"

- a. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;" I Cor. 1:27 (and the "base, despised and not")
- b. So, do not too highly of yourselves - just as mentioned before the gifts

### 7. We should know better, having been explained the Truth to think lofty thoughts of ourselves - We know our true beginning and how we are where we are now

- a. Most of these things I would have not known on my own
- b. We are in a **continual** need of God's Truth/revelation
- c. Our highest insight will never be **dependable**

The Scripture is our "sounding board", our light, our focus

J. Two wrongs don't make a right - vs. 17

See also 1 Thes. 5:15

1. Do not pay back evil received with evil - if cursed do not curse
  - a. When bad is directed at me it is not an "excuse" for me to do what is bad
  - b. This philosophy drives many; they feel the wrong of others makes their poor/bad/evil behavior acceptable
2. Pre-**plan** and have ready good/proper/lawful responses (before all!)
  - a. **προνοοουμενοι** - "Taking thought beforehand." - RWP
  - b. Literally, "...providing for right things before all men."
  - c. "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." 1 Pet. 3:16 - we should not be properly accused of wrong doing
  - d. The key is the pre-planning - forearm yourself with a heart kept "in check"
  - e. Hatred of the person, or bitterness of the situation will distract from our real **purpose** and motive for what we do and are to do in life
  - f. The perspective of Job should be what we strive for - it is based in Truth

Prov. 4:23 - Guard your heart for from it comes the "springs of life" —

We always view obligation righteousness as what binds us and constrains our responses/ reactions

K. As far as your "part" goes, do what you can to be at peace with all men - vs. 18

Again, this does not teach unity as being the highest good to be sought as many would believe, but that we are genuinely trying to keep peace whenever possible

1. "so far as what proceeds from you" ("the from you part") - RWP
  - a. This does not insist on "peace at all costs"
  - b. Truly, before God, do what you can (righteously) to maintain peace
  - c. This stresses what our focus is to be first until **proven** otherwise
  - d. We are not to be "brawlers" (lovers of contention) - it is a "fools mouth" that "calleth for strokes" - Pr. 18:16
2. Contention may follow us and overtake us, but we are not **pursuing** it!
  - a. For the believer, we are to be characterized as those who love peace
  - b. As believers we will be those who ultimately attract and cause separations
  - c. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."
  - d. The above may be our lot, but it is not what we pursue or purpose

Mt. 10:34-37 —

L. Dealing with the desire for vengeance - vs. 19-20

We are not to be those who seek vengeance because of how an evil act affected me (I deserve worse) but only how it stands in comparison with the holiness/ rightness of God

The emphasis is on individuals not on societies or civil governments

1. Times will come, wrongs will be done when we will desire vengeance upon the offender
  - a. If the desire vengeance is self-focused, do not put much "stock" in it
  - b. If the desire for vengeance is God's rightness against those who flaunt their "rightness" over God's then this has **merit**!
  - c. Even when wrongfully wronged, do not seek vengeance yourself - our response requirements have not changed from the previous verses
  - d. This also takes away the moral argument for vigilantes - their cause may be correct but their method is flawed - the motive does not justify the means
2. "...leave room for the wrath of God"
  - a. Leave the judgment for the wrong(s) in God's **perfect** hands

The text is dealing with giving room for God's wrath not ours

- (1). This is literally the "place" we put our "wrath" (give place) - we leave room for God's wrath to work - but we must trust Him
- (2). If we take it into our own hands, we will mess things up
- (3). Our perspective and timing will most assuredly be "off"

- b. 1 Pet. 2:21-23 - He (Christ) “surrendered” Himself to the One Who Judges righteously - This is why He did not need to threaten or retaliate
- c. “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (KJV) - Heb. 12:3

3. Deut. 32:35 - Vengeance belongs strictly to God

- a. This is to be our vantage point if we are to be able to avoid bitterness and deep-seated wrath seeing ungodliness seemingly being undealt with
- b. Again, the Truth should affect our thinking when we are unable to deal with unkindness or cruelty to ourselves or those we love (even when civil government does not deal with it) then we know God has a higher purpose in it but will most assuredly deal with it!
- c. My attempts at vengeance demonstrate my lack of faith

4. So, God allows you to see and meet a need of your “enemy” take up the opportunity

- a. The doing of it is like the “placing of hot coals upon their head”
- b. It will bring about discomfort either to their positive change or in the difficulty dealing with their own conscience
- c. Either way, though, we must trust God in it and His sovereignty in all things

5. “Ye are the children of God, and he loves you; and because he loves you he will permit nothing to be done to you that he will not turn to your advantage. Never take the execution of the law into your own hands; rather suffer injuries. The Son of man is come, not to destroy men’s lives, but to save: be of the same spirit. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. It is the part of a noble mind to bear up under unmerited disgrace; little minds are litigious and quarrelsome.” - Clarke

M. Do not be overcome by the evil that you are to face

- 1. Its intent (as allowed of God) is not destruction - much of the attacks we are to face, from the enemy’s vantage point, is designed mainly for us to abandon our stands, convictions and integrity to use their tactics, methods and thought processes - we become like the enemy in what we do
- 2. Do not be subdued (conquered) with the evil but counter (respond) to the evil with the good - when we seek to respond to any sort of evil our thoughts should be directed to the best possible good in our response
- 3. The key to the application of this concept is in verse 9

- a. Love of God must be genuine affecting thought and action, not just appearance
- b. This affects what we look for in life (what we cleave to and what we abhor)
- c. The evil of pride is overcome as we “prefer” others over ourselves - this is not a poor self-image problem, but a needed placing ourselves in the hands of God for lifting up and putting down
- d. We overcome evil with fervency not with a lazy approach to it - if we wait to deal with evil till we “feel like it” it will be left unchallenged
- e. We overcome the evil that persecutes with expectant hope in God
- f. We overcome evil by maintaining a constant communication with God
- g. We overcome the advancements of evil by “building-up” our “troops” with much needed encouragement and support
- h. Evil must be overcome with responses from the Truth - “bless” don’t curse
- i. Evil is overcome when we seek the promotion of our “brethren” over ourselves - jealousy in the ranks is a divider of units
- J. Evil is overcome when we live by God’s standards - of which we are obliged

Psalm 75:7

We must not be overcome with bitterness or resentment when we hear or see of “criminals” seemingly getting away with their crimes! This can consume our energies if we do not properly steer it correctly in faith to God

We are bound to a higher standard and are not free to respond or retaliate in a manner that **we** deem fitting

Evil often “prevails” when we take on a selfish approach to our being attacked and not coming to the aid of our fellow soldiers when they are attacked

4. Overcome the evil with the good

RWP—a. "But keep on conquering the evil in the good." Drown the evil in the good."

b. Too often, Christians allow the evil done to them to act as an "excuse" for the wrong they plan in return

Look to the Scripture not emotion or reasoning to dictate a response to a wrong(s)!

c. The adage "Two wrongs don't make a right" is very correct

d. Counter the evil with good (a genuinely righteous response)

XX. Always Under God's Authority - Rom. 13:1-7

A. Let every person (soul) be in subjection to the "higher powers" - vs. 1

1. There has been debate whether or not this meant earthly powers or spiritual

2. Based upon the context, it must be referring to earthly, governmental powers

3. The idea of subjection is not one of mere obedience

a. It is placing one's self under the jurisdiction over another

Though, generally the term implies overall obedience

b. We are to be in "subjection" to each other - Eph. 5:21 - this cannot mean strict obedience but a preference we give each other

B. Why, because God has "ordained the powers that be" - vs. 1

1. This is in reference to the powers (positions of authority) that already exist

the "divine right of kings" — a. Some (e.g. kings) like this to refer to individuals strictly

b. The main concept deals with positions of governing and government itself

2. Our Lord pointed out this concept when before Pilate

a. John 19:11 - Pilate had only authority granted by God - God was the ordainer of such positions of authority - Pilate was perplexed when Christ did not defend Himself and spoke of his authority to release or crucify Him

Barnes on John 19:11

b. "You are a magistrate. Your power, as such, is given you by God. You are not, indeed, guilty for accusing me, or malignantly arraigining me; but you have power intrusted to you over my life; and the Jews, who knew this, and who knew that the power of a magistrate was given to him by God, have the greater sin for seeking my condemnation before a tribunal appointed by God"

3. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men"

1 Pet. 2:13-15

4. Psalm 75:7 - God puts up one and puts down another

5. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." Prov. 21:1

C. Whoever resists the "authority" resists God - vs. 2

1. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" Titus 3:1

2. Many Christians fall into despair or distorted thinking when they forget the hand of Almighty God behind the "powers" of human government

Even in our vocations or life placements God, in His perfections, sets up some and puts down others

a. It is essential that we remember this and not give our hearts over to fearing those we should not fear or placing our faith in those to whom it does not properly belong

b. It is good, as mentioned in Titus 1:3 that we are braced for every "good work"

3. We strive to be in subjection (obey) those over us as to the Lord - we obey because we know God's authority, not because those in the positions of authority necessarily deserve it!

Again, these are dealing with "persons" or "souls" referring to their individuality. Governments have differing responsibilities even the decalring of wars

Vocational and institutional authorities should also be viewed as being in God's hands and allowed to be there by His own "ordinance"

4. This does not necessarily refer to individual authorities but authority in general
    - a. These statements are opposed to **anarchy** (no formal rule)
    - b. God established formal rule (governing authorities) - not one type is promoted by God than another
    - c. The book of Judges demonstrates the "everyone doing what is right in his/her own eyes" consequences - they needed "judges" sent to them
  5. Those resisting are resisting literally the "arrangement" of God (ordinance)
    - a. They bring to themselves "condemnation" - judgement
    - b. This is the word "κρῖμα" which is translated "judgement" and refers to a **decision** being made (in this case at a court of law)
    - c. Condemnation may come upon us, but we do not want it to be "of ourselves"
  6. It takes faith to remember God behind the positions of government
    - a. Disappointment with the individual leaders themselves is sure to come, but we must not seek the overthrow of the whole of government!
    - b. If there are **lawful** ways to challenge and correct government, take them
    - c. But always seek first/foremost the higher power of God
- D. Civil government is there as "ministers" of God - vs. 3-4
1. Rulers are not to be feared because we are doing what is good (good as being what is lawful and right before the state government)
  2. As mentioned earlier, we only disobey when dictated to disobey God - but this may not occur as often as one might think. God established these "powers"
    - a. Paul wrote this at a time of leaders such as Nero, who was wicked
    - b. Paul appealed to his lawful rights as a Roman citizen - this was ultimately used of God to bring him "before kings"
  3. If we do not want to fear government, **obey** the laws established
  4. These positions are ultimately as "servants" of God to us for our good
    - Government is here to protect, to give order - these are good
  5. When we do evil, we have right to be "afraid" because of their God-given duty
    - The "sword" is not held without purpose - this is the power of civil government to punish wrong doers, even to capital punishment - but it should only be for truly "wrong doing"
  6. Here is one way God will bring about "vengeance" on those practicing evil
    - God's timing is precise when to deliver one to these authorities as were the "evil doers" in Germany after the second World War
- E. Be "in subjection" for conscience sake - vs. 5-7
1. To be in "subjection" is literally to be "in an **orderly** fashion under"
    - a. This is termed as being "necessary" - constraint, urgency
    - b. Not just because we may face consequences - those motivated by avoiding what they fear make very little if none at all progress in life
  2. Submit for the sake of conscience, as it being the right thing before God to do
    - a. As a wife is in submission, not because of the quality or deservedness of her husband, but because it is **before** God - Eph. 5:22
    - b. Our conscience should be pricked now that we know it is God's ordinance
    - c. David would not take the life of Saul because he knew him to be "the Lord" anointed" - 1 Sam. 26:9-11
  3. This is the motivation for paying taxes
    - a. It is payment to God's **institution** (ordinance)
    - b. It is literally paying to meet the needs of "God's servants"

"Never behave rudely to any person; but behave respectfully to men in office: if you cannot even respect the man-for an important office may be filled by an unworthy person-respect the office, and the man on account of his office. If a man habituate himself to disrespect official characters, he will soon find himself disposed to pay little respect or obedience to the laws themselves." Clarke

4. Literally "give away" all that is rightfully due others - vs. 7
  - a. "Render" - pay it out - whatever the debt is ("due")
  - b. The emphasis is not on the "owing" as much as on the paying
5. The categories of debts to be paid up on
  - a. "tax" - as a property tax or like our sales tax
  - b. "custom" - as in a levied tax (toll) to meet the expenses of government
  - c. "fear" - as in a respectful fear of those rightfully "bearing the sword"
    - This type of fear is part of our motive to do right and obey laws
  - d. "honor" - literally the idea is "value" - τιμη - the price/value of something
    - Their value is not in themselves but in the position God has given
6. It is God we revere, thus we revere His ordained authorities (positions) because of Who He is and not because of the people occupying the positions

#### XXI. The Ongoing Debt of Love Motivated by the Shortness of Our Time - Rom. 13:8-14

##### A. "Owe nothing to anyone..." - "Let no debt remain outstanding"

1. Pay what you owe to others (we are obligated to pay our debts)
  - a. As mentioned before, this involves government as well
  - b. To others we must be responsible to pay our "bills"
  - c. We are not discharged from debts because we are Christians, we pay them because we are Christians
2. There are some who say this refers to having no debts
  - a. No doubt this would be ideal, but throughout Scripture there have been debts and they were even overseen by the Law
  - b. In context, the idea is not to "cheat" on another - to fail to pay what is owed
  - c. A loan includes an agreement of payment - these must be paid

Do not default on what you owe!

##### B. There is a debt, though, we will never reach the end of paying - love

1. We must never see ourselves as having discharged this debt
2. We reach a point with bills that we have met payment for the allotted time and can rest till billed again, though with love this is not so. We will never meet the payment in full for any time. We are always behind on payment and will never catch-up (as it were) to an end. We will never be "paid ahead" with love!

Again, this love must be without hypocrisy - it must be genuine

- Rick Lambert —
3. It is as though God has shown us our debt of love to Him, which is far more than we could ever begin to pay, and has assigned us to pay it back to those He brings us
  4. Our love for others is of debt to God, not the individuals - they (an we) do not truly deserve to be loved, so we do it out of our love debt to God

##### C. He that loves (his neighbor) has fulfilled the Law (that part of the law of God)

1. Who is our neighbor? - Luke 10:29-37 (the "good Samaritan") - vs. 8-9
2. It fulfills the Law in that we "do no ill to our neighbor"
3. This is best accomplished and maintained by being obligated to love them
4. For, as the Law states, thou shalt not...

"fulfilled" - satisfied what is required

Adultery finds its source in a focus on self and "getting" while love finds its source in a focus on others and giving to their good, not their detriment

- a. "commit adultery" - "They will not commit adultery, for, when two people allow their physical passions to sweep them away, the reason is not that they love each other too much but that they love each other too little. In real love, there is at the same time respect and restraint, which saves from sin." Barclay
- b. "murder" - the taking of innocent life - one does not murder what they love
- c. "steal" - stealing comes from a focus on self satisfaction avoiding work to obtain, while love sees the best for the owner (as given by God)

If these commandments were traced back to their intent it would be found in this statement

As a mother would characteristically love her children never intending wrong because of her focus. Plotting wrong to her children is not what she does. Plotting their good, even to her harm is.

d. "covet" - "to set the heart upon" - in this case used for an obsessive focus upon one's self with disregard for others. Love finds satisfaction in seeing others with nice "things" irregardless of **itself**

5. Nevertheless, all the commands dealing with others is summed in the one - Lev. 19:18

a. Literally love (selfless) "the one near you" as you do yourself

b. What you would aspire for yourself, you aspire for others

6. Love does no wrong to a neighbor - the laws mentioned are not "difficult"

a. "Fulfillment of law is love" - it is the goal of **these** laws

b. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:" I Tim. 1:5 (KJV)

c. This is the goal of "law" - a selflessness focused on the good of others - not simply overbearing commands to act as sadistic pressures

D. The time is now to act - vs. 11

1. "And this do..." - take what was just discussed (all from the beginning of chapter 12 to present our bodies) in light of the time in which we are living

2. "knowing the time" - **καιρον** - as it were the season or opportunity of time

a. We are and have been in the "**last** days"

b. The last days have been since Christ (as our tracking of time indicated)

c. We live in the latter days where the light of Truth is known - God's plan has been revealed

3. It is the "high time" or the "hour" for us to be as those awake

a. We are not to see ourselves as those sleeping waiting for the day

b. We are to see ourselves and act accordingly that the dawn is coming, we must be awake to preparing for the day! (the "day" where it is "day")

c. The world is one of darkness not of light - darkness personified ignorance or disillusionment (**stumbling** in darkness)

d. We who have the light of God's Truth must not be seeking to stay in the comfort of our beds but up and to the work to face the day coming

e. "Awake to righteousness" - be sober - I Cor. 15:34 - the challenge is for them to "stop sinning" because some have no **knowledge** of God; to which he mentions is to their **shame**

f. See also I Thes. 5:5-6 - don't sleep, watch and be sober

4. For "now the salvation nearer to us than when we believed"

a. It is "the salvation" - **η σωτηρια** - the event of glorification

b. It is at hand - closer than it was when we first believed - time is passing and we must seize the moment for our Lord (His services)

c. Either in His second coming or in our death, it is most assuredly closer and we cannot go back to **reclaim** time or opportunity lost!

E. The "night is almost gone" - prepare yourself - vs. 12-13

1. This time of darkness which encompasses the creation is almost at an end

a. We do not live for this life and its darkness but, as in any dark surrounding, the light of what is coming catches hold of our attention (focus) and we are not to be distracted with the blindness and confusion of the darkness again

b. We live knowing the "day is at hand" - the time is **upon** us

c. We live (or are to live) as those hurried at the appointment coming

2. Heb 10:25; 1Pe 4:7; Jas 5:8; 1Th 5:2-6; Php 4:5 - We are changed in how we live life as we see "the day approaching"

"B.C. - Before Christ

A.D. - Anno Domini - the year of our Lord or since Christ"

This is, as it were, our alarm clock alerting us to the hour of our opportunity - it is our "season" to act - as we will give account - Rom. 14:12

Leave off the "distractions of darkness" - live in the light not as one having no light (or no "clue" as to what life is really about)

3. In light of the coming light, let us lay aside the “workings” of the darkness

The helmet of salvation - keep our head with our destiny  
The breastplate of righteousness - protect our vitals with rightness of in living  
The shield of faith - guard us from the destructive blows of darts of doubts, designed to stop our advancement

- a. These “efforts” for the sake of “living for the dark time” are to be neglected, laid aside as being seen to have no more purpose in who we are
- b. In contrast, we are to “put on” the armor of light - literally the instruments of war, the weapons of the light (Truth)
- c. These are what characterize us (as unique body-armor) from the enemy and protect us from the advancements of the enemy seeking their cause
- d. Life is not for sleep but for battle!

4. Behave as one whose life is seen by all - as in the day

We are not as those seeking to avoid reality but those facing it in faith

We are not as those seeking to indulge as many desires as possible

We are not as those surrendering to their passions, leading others to our same areas of surrender

We are not as those seeking our own glory and comfort, but the best for others, even and especially over ourselves

- a. This is to be how we “walk” - live, going about what we do (in contrast to the darkness where things are done to remain secret)
- b. It is behaving “decently” - with decorum fitting a child of light
- c. Not “carousing” - literally partying - no care for the seriousness of needed work and our responsibility with what we have been given (and shortness of time) - These are those spending their lives in “luxury” as though it will not end
- d. Not in “drunkenness” - over-indulgence of normal desires (or a misuse of desire, lacking discipline to stop where desire becomes gluttony)
- e. Not in “sexual promiscuity” (also “chambering”) - seeking to get one to your bed (lustful) and sensuality (“wantonness”) where discretion and normal defenses against such are lowered or dropped altogether
- f. Nor in “strife and jealousy” - avoiding quarreling and envying - this would go against “our debt of love” to others

F. In addition to what we “put off” we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” - vs. 14

1. “To be clothed with a person is a Greek phrase, signifying to assume the interests of another-to enter into his views, to imitate him, and be wholly on his side.” Clarke
2. It has the idea to become like the one you “put on” - it is as though what characterizes Christ is what we wear

- The Lord was opposite to the “deeds of darkness” listed previously

3. And in doing so, we are not to be providing for the “lusts of the flesh”

“...and of the flesh, forethought do not make for lusts” Interlinear

- a. This does not say we are not to provide for our bodies as some have taken this and other concepts beyond their scope
- b. Literally, we are not those providing for (as if for future provision) of the flesh “ in regard to its lusts (not “laying-up” for them)
- c. It also means to give no “forethought” to providing for them - take caution in what you truly plan for

4. Many excuse their sin by the over-convenience of it - “it was there, what was I to do?”
  - a. If need be, plan ahead to avoid it - make it inconvenient by good forethought
  - b. Focus is to be on the “day” approaching and are preparing for it

XXII. Dealing with Differing “Scruples” Amongst Believers - Rom. 14

A. There will be differing senses of right and wrong in every congregation of believers

1. With the variety of backgrounds of those coming to the Faith there also comes a differing sense (baggage) of religion in general
  - a. Most will be highly “standardized” (in the sense of well-defined standards)
  - b. So much of religion is our doing and God responding missing the truth of God being the doer and we being the responders
  - c. Many will come with standards which they will equate with orthodoxy

2. Who are the “weak” being discussed?

- a. These are the “weak in **faith**” - not physical or mental
- b. These are they underestimating liberty in Christ - out of an overly-sensitive conscience they believe they must hold these stricter standards (not necessarily just out of protection) but out of being/proving genuineness

3. Those “strong” in the faith are the “accept” them - “take them to you” (befriend)

- a. Do not shun them because of differences (one is more liberal, the other more conservative)
- b. Do not take them in to argue with them or to deliberately cast doubts on their “weak in faith” practices (which usually makes it worse)
- c. The key purpose is not the winning of debate but of **winning** the person

4. The example of a difference - vs. 2

- a. One believes they “can eat anything” (not dealing with their physical well-being but of their liberty “religiously”)
- b. The other restricts their diet to vegetables, most likely in an attempt to be more “pure” or “holy” in their attempts to be **pleasing** to God
  - These are “weak” only in their faith (that their works are mostly pleasing to God rather than their faith in His accomplished work)

5. So, how do each treat one another in the same assembly? - vs. 3

- a. The counsel is not that they part ways - there are more important issues than these “non-**essentials**” that deserve attention
- b. So often we separate over the little things robbing ourselves over the opportunities to influence others in the greater matters of life and faith
- c. To the one who sees that they are free to eat “all things” not “make little” (despise) the one who is convicted by it
- d. To the one who believes that their “faith” restricts the eating of certain foods (such as meat) they are not to pronounce a judgement of wrong on the one who believes they may eat all things

6. The key factor is that “God has received him” - we are not to view others where they are in relation to us and our personal stands (standards) but where they stand before God

- a. Many of us will be misguided in our discerning of what is debatable and what is not (issues) if we are not **students** of the Truth
- b. Many of the separations of the past have happened over non-essentials

B. Always keep in mind whose servants we really are - vs. 4

1. “Who are you to judge the servant of another?”

- a. It would be wrong for one employer to try to dictate to another man’s employee
- b. It would be wrong for a brother to seek to usurp the discernment of a parent and conclude a matter concerning another sibling

2. As we “to our own master” stand or fall - we are not to be driven by the dictates, standards and scruples of one another. We may learn and properly glean from these, but these are not be looked upon as our governing authority; neither are we to seek to be in such a **position** !

- If we truly believe a brother is at fault, if we have proven ourselves ahead of time to truly love them, we will “have a say” with them

3. God is our master not we being each others masters. We serve at His desire, His word using His priorities.

A friend proven true can carry more sway than the best of intellects

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. Pr. 18:19

Beware the focus on others that belittles them for not “knowing” all that we believe we know - we are never condescenders, only God does this

Beware the focusing on others personal conscience prickers of debateable issues

We must use utmost caution in our determination of what is a worthy reason to separate and not “receive” another - the list should not be long

4. "...and stand he will" - the Lord, his master, is able to make him "stand"

God is quite strong enough to "turn around" one of His servants headed the wrong way

Our "stands" will come as a result of Godliness and our standards will not make us Godly

- a. This is in contrast to "falling" which many with high scruples may think is inevitable (unavoidable) to those with differing standards
- b. Many Christians see it as their calling to keep other people "right" in their standards with the focus that this will cause them to be Godly
- c. As in I Thes. 5:23-24 there is a wish for their "sanctifying entirely" and a clarification, "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."

C. The first priority of "full persuasion" in one's reasons (thoughts) - vs. 5-6

1. Many have stands and standards that they are unsure as to why they really have them
  - a. We do not want to be characterized by "traditional" stands where we stand because those before us stood there
  - b. Each generation and each individual needs to work these out with purpose!
2. One regards a day (the observance of it) as more important than others while another regards all days the same
  - a. This reference is more likely to issues such as the feast days of the Jews than it is of the "Sabbath" day of the "Lord's day"
  - b. One feels obligated to observe the purpose of the day while the other does not
  - c. When issues of disagreement between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians in Acts 15 the holy days were not placed as obligations on the Gentile Christians (they were no longer essentials)

3. Paul stressed this point in further detail in Col. 2:16-23

- a. No one is to judge us in respect to what we eat or what days we observe
- b. When these practices were initiated in the Old Testament times they were the "shadow" of the good to come (and be fulfilled) in Christ. Now that we have the "substance" why would we still be dependant upon the shadow?
- c. We are not to allow ourselves to be "defrauded" of the "prize" (our liberty in purchased by Christ's work) by those stressing things "they have seen" - walking by experience as their authority (existentialism) and not by faith
- d. These get this way because they do not "hold fast the Head" (Christ)
  - He and His righteousness (work) are not the focus of these in error
- e. These and their detailed lists of standards (for qualifying righteousness) are to "perish with the using" and originate from a "self made religion"

Some manuscripts contained the "not seen" idea in verse 18 while to — oldest do not. Either way, the individual is not a genuine authority on priorities

The instruction goes on in chapter 3 to set the focus and heart on things above not on the things on the earth

4. Each is to be fully persuaded (convinced) in his own mind

- a. To act against conscience is not wise (nor would we want to push others to act against their personal standards)
- b. If liberty is to be exercised by one weaker in faith, let it come by their learning the Truth (in context) not by persuasive arguments of people
- c. With our conclusions to our stands (standards) we need to be fully convinced of why or why not we allow something or refuse it. The mind should not be convinced by mere opinion but seek to be swayed by the Truth

The idea is not of blind action, letting go of sensible cautions, but one of searching out the Scripture for truth of priorities, avoiding the "bandwagon" mentality or the "soapbox cause"

5. We are to be persuaded that what we do is "in light the Lord" - vs. 6

- a. There underlying purpose is "for the Lord" - not just for His purposes but because of Him - I am free to eat all things because my distinguishing characteristic before God is no longer my dietary standards or the days I observe, but Christ and His work
- b. When one eats, whatever he eats, he gives thanks to God as the giver of the food, not being solely focused on what type of food it is

There does not have to be a reasoned out purpose to bring glory to God in all I do, but I do what I do as before His eyes as my Master

c. Both, the one who restricts the diet and the one who does not, give thanks to God for what they eat. The type of food is not the key; the gratefulness to God as the giver and master is!

D. We are not our own and we must live ( daily ) in light of this fact - vs. 7-9

1. "For not one of us" truly lives for himself - we are "domestic servants" of the Lord

a. Our time, strength, talents, possessions and intellects are not ours to dispose of as we would will (not "for himself")

b. We have these for the purposes of our Master and His purposes - we do not live as in our own household, but in and for His

2. Even our death (dying) is in His hands - this is not and will not be ours to determine - since this is so, we are to use our times wisely, not be guaranteed of more

3. We have been purchased at a "price" - I Cor. 6:19-20

a. I Pet. 4:1-2 - Live, not to lusts but to the "will of God"

b. Lu. 9:23 - we are to see ourselves as "taking up our cross daily"

c. Therefore, we are grateful for what we are given and see the source as our Lord, and we are not bitter when we are not given that which we may set our heart upon in distracted error

4. My living, as long as it may be, is to be seen as "to the Lord" as will my dying be

5. In my death (in eternity) I will also "be the Lord's" - this is and always will be our life

6. Therefore, we cannot live as "isolationists" to ourselves - we interact with other for the Lord - those seeking isolation from their calling our purpose in the world are the epitome of living for self.

7. It was for this "end" (purpose) that Christ died and lived again!

\_\_\_\_\_ a. He died and rose again that we might be His

b. It is key to know that he "lived again" to confirm that He is Lord over the living and the dead (those in eternity)

c. "With this view, we can leave our friends with confidence in his hands when they die, and yield our own bodies cheerfully to the dust when he shall call our spirits hence. But it is not only over the body that his dominion is established. This passage proves that the departed souls of the saints are still subject to him." Barnes

E. So, why would we be standing in judgment of one another? - vs. 10

1. Why would the "weaker" in faith be judging (reaching final conclusion with intended sentence) the one who sees and takes more liberties in non-essentials?

2. Why would the "stronger" in faith belittle (despise) the one with stricter standards than themselves (as in using it for a reason to disregard them)?

3. Why would we see as how we will all stand before the judgement seat ( $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$ ) of God

4. "Do not make complaints against one another, Brothers, or judgement will be passed upon you. The Judge is already standing at the door!" (TCNT) James 5:9

5. We give an account of ourselves before the Lord not before one another

a. If I strive to be the one a brother answers to, I will most assuredly be a diversion from his true Master and Guide!

b. In our zeal to be a controlling factor, we can either become the focus of those we pursue or discourage their overall outlook on their calling for Christ

6. As in II Cor. 5:10 we will all appear before His judgement seat (tribunal) to give account of the deeds we performed while in these bodies. Do these deeds serve our purposes and scrutiny or the ones of our Master? We ask these now, not later!

"Therefore, what we do, or what we leave undone, should be in reference to that eternity which is ever at hand." Clarke

"And it does much to alleviate the pains of separation from pious, beloved friends, to reflect that they depart still to love and serve the same Saviour in perfect purity, and unvexed by infirmity and sin. Why should we wish to recall them from his perfect love in the heavens to the poor and imperfect service which they would render if in the land of the living?" Barnes

F. Each of us will give an “account” (reckoning) to God - vs. 11-12

1. It is written - Isa. 45:3 - “By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” (ASV)
2. Why would we stand in judgement (with our **own** authority) realizing that...
  - a. “As I live, says the Lord...” - God, as it were, stating the following as if an oath by His own existence (which is of Himself) - it is assured to be true!
  - b. “every knee shall bow” - all do and will answer to God

εξομολογησεται — c. “every tongue will confess” - all will outwardly agree with God’s judgment

- No one will disagree with His ultimate judgment why would we now?

3. So then realize, that we all will give a **reckoning** of ourselves to God
  - a. As it were a “ledger of words” accounting for what we did with what we had been given by God (as if an ultimate audit)
  - b. The accounting will be of ourselves, not of our “brothers”
  - c. This is to be the concept driving us in our lives, seeking to “please Him who hath called us to be soldiers” not in seizing the “reigns” of control acting as commander in chief - II Tim. 2:4

Part of the “entanglements of this life are the temporary worries that distract our focus from the eternal controller

G. So, based upon the facts of our situation let us make a determination - vs. 13

1. Not to judge one another anymore - stop making these non essential distinguishings
  - a. We do not measure a person by the details/content of their present scruples
  - b. We do not measure a person by the details/content of their liberties
2. We are to be determined not to place a “stumblingblock” or **trip** them up
  - a. These “stubs” that cause other to loose their footing in their “walk”
  - b. When we make issues of non-essentials we run the risk of causing them (the issues) to become distractions, **blurring** their focus
  - c. Many believers find themselves distracted with these issues, unable to gain proper footing to face the real issues of growth and challenge
3. We are to be determined not to place “traps” or obstacles in their “walk”
  - a. These are “snares” entrapping their victims - victims are brought to these with lures, ensnaring them for food or for the purpose of becoming lures themselves (as with the “snare of the fowler”)
  - b. We must proceed with utmost caution when counselling a fellow believer to make sure we are clearly giving them unquestionable **essentials**
  - c. How are we, with the God-given opportunities we have been given, directing the attention of those we are enabled to influence?

These they will need to be directed upon the One who is able to make them stand

H. The facts of the matter in light of our calling to one another - vs. 14-18

1. Paul clarifies the issue of what to eat as before (or in light of ) Christ
  - a. Nothing is “unclean” or literally “common” - the idea of “common” and “unclean” were often synonymous with the Jews as they saw that whatever the masses ate must be unclean BECAUSE everyone was “doing it”
  - b. In the reality of food, this was not truly the case
  - c. But if someone is convinced it is wrong, to them it is wrong - we should not push someone to **defile** their conscience!
  - d. Many will have the tendency, when they contradict their conscience, to go well beyond what they would have thought in the “liberty”
2. If we are determined to exercise our freedom to a brother’s hurt, we are missing one the our fundamental tenants - to be driven by love

I Tim. 4:4 - “Everything created by God is good, and there is nothing that need be rejected-- provided only that it is received thankfully;” (TCNT)

Our focus is not even others first. Our first focus is on Christ Who died for them

We may win the "argument" and even be proven to be right with the facts of the issue and still be wrong in our approach and result. These are the "victories" that lead to failures!

This peace is one of a right standing not being pricked by our conscience because we were used to hurt another with our persistence in our exercises of liberty

God's kingdom will not be founded upon temporal things! If it will not last into eternity, it is worth yielding.

3. Do not "destroy," with what you eat, the one Christ died for
  - a. Do not "render useless" as it were this person - again, this would typically come as they are led to defile their conscience lending to them crossing other "lines" that **before** they had determined not to cross
  - b. If God places such value on them, why would I deem the exercise of my liberty more important than they
  - c. This is in the imperative - we must; there is no other way we should consider
4. Do not let the good of what you have in your liberty in Christ be an occasion to be used by others to speak evil (defame) it
  - a. Over the centuries of the Church this stubborn exercise of liberty and defense of one's "rightness" on a given topic has been used to defame (even blaspheme) the Gospel for which we stand and the freedom offered in the work of Christ!
  - b. In our defense of personal liberty and our rightness in it we may hinder the very **message** we are seeking to proclaim
  - c. I Cor. 8:9-13 - We "sin against Christ" when wounding a brother's conscience (when it is weak) using our **knowledge** to do so
5. We should be focused and driven by what the "kingdom of God" really is - vs. 17
  - a. The "kingdom of God" is not distinguished by these externals/temporals
  - b. The "kingdom of God" is distinguished by righteousness and its pursuit (in our lives), genuine peace (mainly with God and fellow believers) and the joy produced by the Holy Spirit of God at work in us
  - c. "It means, that the Christian must so live as to be appropriately denominated a righteous man, and not a man whose whole attention is absorbed by the mere ceremonies and outward forms of religion." Barnes
  - d. It is good to look upon the idea of "the kingdom of God" as God's agenda being accomplished upon this earth - we will not misuse our liberties if we are seeking God's agendas before our own
  - e. The joy of the Holy Spirit is produced when we have confirmed that we have acted in **harmony** with the will of God and not in opposition to it
6. He who serves Christ in this way (righteousness/peace/joy)
  - a. He who serves God by doing the right thing to maintain proper peace and seeks continually the joy of being used by God in submission to His Spirit - this is the person "acceptable to God" and "approved of men"
  - b. "acceptable to God" - in full agreement with God
  - c. "approved of men" - found to be **genuine** - integrity
  - d. Clearly, some of the times that our testimony for God that will be strongest will be during those times when we yield our rights to liberty for the sake of another's growth and relationship with and before God
1. Setting our focus to build-up one another in Christ - vs. 19-21
  1. "... our whole life, ought to be concerned with the edifying of one another, inasmuch that we consider that thing unlawful, by reason of the offence of our brother, which is of itself pure and lawful." GBN
  2. We are to be in diligent pursuit of that which would lend more to "peace" with another
    - a. As a general ministry philosophy, this will provide more **opportunity**
    - b. We must be focused on purpose, patient with people and circumstances, and valuing our service as before God to pursue peace for this purpose

It is not the pursuit of peace simply for peace sake, but to build up their faith

Let the unadulterated Truth and its unadulterated presentation be what trips other up, not the pursuit of our rightness

God's will will not be thwarted but we most assuredly do not want to be those "swimming against" and unstoppable current

Others can be robbed of their motivation/joy/strength when their focus is driven to non-essential issues

I am free to express opinion but I am not free to be right and I am not free to control its affects on others

Our acknowledgment of God and His eyes will affect (direct) our paths. If this is practiced in small matters as illustrated, what would be the excellence of it being practiced in the weightier matters!

As is the double-minded man of James 1:8

3. One key way to accomplish this atmosphere that lends towards peace is the pursuit of God's goals over our own; God's greatness before others over our own
    - a. It is our constant seeking of differences with our own tastes and "comfort zones" that takes our eyes off the **proper** goal
    - b. Our commonness is in Christ and His death for us - He will be God's "stumbling stone" - "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." - 1 Peter 2:6-8
  4. The gaining of knowledge for the sake of having knowledge "puffs" us up while genuine love (charity) for others edifies (**build**/repairs)- 1 Cor. 8:1
  5. So, for issues such as food, do not destroy (tear down) the work of God - vs. 20
    - a. "destroy" has the idea of disintegration by "loosening up"
    - b. It is the tearing down of the structures by which God is building up
    - c. Even though all these things are actually "clean" they can become evil issues when used to **discourage** a brother
  6. Three results we seek to avoid - vs. 21
    - a. It is good to abstain or avoid certain freedoms or practices to...
    - b. Avoid tripping up a fellow believer - distracting/diverting their progress
    - c. Avoid entrapping a fellow believer - **stopping** their progress
    - d. Avoid weakening a fellow believer - slowing/fatiguing their progress
  7. Rest assured, when I flaunt my liberties I will be used to distract other believers from their focus of living for God's purposes, I will be used to make other believers idle in the walk for God (stuck not quite knowing what to do or where to go from there) or I will be used to rob them of their true source of strength in the Truth (vs. opinion) and the joy produced in obedience by the Holy Spirit - this we do not want
- J. Contentment or condemnation - a matter of conscience - vs. 22-23
1. Truly blessed is the person that can act in good conscience
    - a. A clear conscience **on** a matter allows for thorough enjoyment **of** the matter
    - b. An effective conscience is a well-taught (informed) conscience with more than an "**internal** opinion poll" as its authority!
  2. Truest of all, though, a person is most content when they do not truly "judge" for themselves, but see themselves in a continual state of God's judgement (decisions of what is right and wrong and what is good or best)
    - a. This is one who need not condemn (discern) what is "approved" for himself mostly because he has already and continues to pursue what is God's right in a thing to pursue or what is wrong before God in a thing to be **neglected** (disregarded)
    - b. Our conscience is most likely to be condemning when we are unsure of God's idea or ideal on a particular issue of potential liberty
  3. "Whatever is not done with a full conviction that it is right, is sinful; whatever is done when a man doubts whether it is right, is sin" - Barnes translation
  4. The word is **διακρινόμενος** and it has the idea of vacillating between two points not being convinced that it is a right thing to do

### XXIII. Our Obligation of Self-Sacrifice for Others - Rom. 15:1-7

#### A. We who are strong - this is the group about to receive the challenge

##### 1. These are those well taught in the Truth

- a. There are those well taught that still have not learned
- b. Heb. 5:11-14 - this was a group that had been taught much and should at this point be as teachers themselves but they became "dull in their hearing"
  - "...but it is difficult to explain it to you, because you have shown yourselves so slow to learn." (TCNT)
- c. Knowledge is proven to become understanding when it is practiced - "But solid food' is for Christians of mature faith--those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish right from wrong." - Heb. 5:14

##### 2. These are those confident in their faith in the work of Christ totally for the pleasing of God (overall - I cannot lose His love)

- a. The strong are those whose conscience is not pricked by non-essentials
- b. They live, acting on their faith (confidence/assurance)
- c. These are those motivated and instructed not to cause the weak to stumble or be ensnared in a problem

#### B. We are to bear up their weaknesses (as on our shoulders)

##### 1. We are to "endure" them - as in the emphasis of "charity suffers long"

- a. They will "grind" at my knowledge but as so well clarified in I Cor. 13, even if I have all knowledge, if I do not love, I am NOTHING!
- b. I will know others to be wrong in their thinking or conclusions but I bear with them in it focused on their good beyond this time or dilemma

##### 2. We are to carry the burden of them with them - as in when we restrict our freedoms so as not to discourage them

- a. When we "put up" with the "oddities" of others, we are "bearing with them"
- b. We want their best! We will go to great lengths to see them built up

#### C. We who are strong are not to live to "please ourselves" - vs. 1-3

##### 1. We are not to be driven to have circumstances "agreeable" to us

- A present infinitive - "to be pleasing ourselves"

##### 2. Let each of us **please** his neighbor - literally those "near us" - these are the ones God places near us in His divine appointments

- a. We are driven for "his good" with purpose to "his edification"
- b. We sacrifice and deny ourselves for their good with the focus to their being built-up - "Not to seek to secure for him indulgence in those things which would be injurious to him, but in all these things which his welfare would be promoted." Barnes

##### 3. We will often miss the best for others (building others) when our focus is on our own pleasure - what makes us feel better and builds us

- Often in the pursuit of pleasing ourselves (getting ourselves to a level of comfort) that we miss ever getting there because there is no more a self-gratifying situation than to be used to encourage and build-up another believer in their faith

##### 4. The term for edification is an architectural term - their construction ultimately lending to their final integrity - we cannot anticipate the ways that God will use even our smallest sacrifices for others to become a lasting influence on them, how they think and act and their perspective of God

As so clarified that those who have been given much (insight into the Master's will) much more will be required of them - Luke 12:42-48

Place their  
comfort  
time  
emotions  
needs  
above our own

The idea with "please" is to be "agreeable"

5. One of the key ideas with this is to be "approachable" - we do not want to put forward the "do not **touch**" or "do not approach" spirit

6. For EVEN Christ did not "please" Himself

a. His focus was primarily on **pleasing** God

b. The "reproaches" intended for God "fell" upon our Lord - the "chidings, railings" were directed at Christ when they were ultimately in response to anger and dislike of God's plan and working

c. In like manner we expect, as our Lord, to face the railings of those in opposition to God - John 15:18 - He was hated first and we can expect unkind responses from those against Christ on many points

7. Also, as in John 15:25 there will be times when we will be "hated" without a cause

8. It is essential we identify who we are truly living to please as this dictates response as well as **expectations**

a. If I live for myself, others differences will be a continual irritation

b. If I live (daily) for God's purposes and the best for others I will expect differences (contradictions) and will not be misguided by them but will stay "on focus" (why I am here and why God has brought them my way)

D. Examples like that predicted of Christ were also written for our instruction - vs. 4

1. These examples are applicable to us and our daily practices

2. They were written to teach and guide us in what we do - learning from the lessons that others learned and proved - this spares us trouble if we heed it and helps us avoid the wasting of time

3. The purpose of learning these truths (examples) is to **teach** us..

a. The need and benefit of perseverance - remaining under the present pressure

• Many lessons are not learned because we quite and miss the proof

b. The encouragement to do right based upon these examples - these provide motivation to do what is right even when faced with contradiction as we are able to look back and see the **ending** result

4. All of this learning brings us hope (sustains it) - our focus during these times can easily drift to ourselves robbing us of the motivating hope to press on

a. This hope is, in reality, a set expectation of the ultimate outcome

b. Hope "deferred" (put off) makes the "heart sick" (weak) - but when the "answers comes" it is a "tree of life" - it is a sustaining force to see our hope (expectation) fulfilled in our obedience

E. Be of the "same mind toward one another" - vs. 5-6

1. The source of this "oneness of mind" is not the primary focus on unity, but the source of the unity (the truest Unifier), God

2. God is the giver of perseverance and encouragement - we must look to Him and His truth (in these scriptural examples) to get us through hardships/challenges

a. It is interesting to note that ultimately we need both together: I need encouragement to persevere and I need to persevere to be encouraged

b. "We must take an example of patience from God: that both the weak and the strong, serving God with a mutual consent, may bring one another to God, as Christ also received us to himself, although we were ever so unworthy."

3. The same source of these qualities will be the One we need to "grant" us to be unified in our thinking in accordance (mimicing) our Lord

• As clarified in Php. 2 - "Let this mind be in you..." - emptied self for God's purposes

Many of us, out of irritation with others' differences, will continually be looking to avoid others which will make me hone my critical skills over my discerning skills with the needs of others

A lack of familiarizing ourselves (continually) with the examples and proofs of the Scripture weakens our resolve, levels of encouragement and ultimately what we expect in any given situation or challenge

Romans 5 - "the hope that does not make us ashamed"

GBN

excitedly unanimous —

4. To be of “one mind” or “like-minded” is literally to be of one “sentiment”
  - a. We are unanimously agreed on a **guiding** goal - Christ
  - b. Literally follow after Christ - in harmony and “in step” with Him
5. All with the intended outcome to be with “one passion” (ομοθυμοδον)
  - a. Developing “one voice” - what we speak all focused on God’s glory
  - b. We would be noted for our **unity** of speech not by our “bickerings”
6. This, though, is not unity for unity’s sake, it is unity in “accordance” (after) the example of Christ (as we are to be being molded to His image) - Rom. 8:29
  - a. Not just Christ as our example but as our “**norm**” (standard)
  - b. “The final phrase excludes all wrongful unanimity; to be minding the same thing “in accord with Christ Jesus.” All will have the same convictions when these harmonize with Christ Jesus.” Lenski
  - c. Part of our unifying speech and hearts will be acting in accord with God’s provision of perseverance and encouragement to each other
  - d. We are to be singularly united around Christ, His teaching, His purpose
7. All our unified purpose is focused on the glorifying of God
  - a. As He is the God and Father of our Lord and “norm”, Christ
  - b. We “accept” others based on their standing before God, not on their standing before **ourselves**

John 5:30 - His judgement was just because He was not seeking and doing His own will but the will of the Father

F. The conclusion to the whole matter - vs. 7

1. Accept one another - literally “take to yourselves”
  - “Acknowledge one another as Christians, and treat one another as such, though you may differ in opinion about many smaller matters.” - Barnes
2. The term “receive” is also appropriate as it communicates our acting in submission and harmony to God’s **sending** them our way
3. We do this, not because we will necessarily want to but in following our “standard”, Christ
4. The acceptance was not even primarily for our own good and happiness (though this is a definite result) but ultimately for the Glory of God
  - a. This is to be the fundamental reason for what we do and why - I Cor. 10:31
  - b. This drastically changes our human reasons for what we do and choose
  - c. If this is daily set as my agenda, I will soon come to find my satisfaction finds its source in doing the will of God (the Father) and knowing what that will is and practicing (to make permanent) my looking for it daily!

XXIV. The Example of Christ in Service to God’s Purposes - Rom. 15:8-13

A. “For I confirm” that Christ has become a servant - vs. 8

1. This is our Lord’s plan and purpose that we are to mimic - servitude
  - a. It is where we get our word for “deacon” - a minister, one who serves
  - b. A servant finds his daily **schedule** in the biddings of his master
  - c. Ideally, a servant is to have his will be set in the constant discovery and obedience to the will of the one he serves
2. This is a key example (picture) for us to truly grasp as it set our expectations where they are to be in our goal planning
  - a. He became a servant to the Jews to demonstrate and fulfill God’s truth
  - b. He became a servant to the Gentiles to demonstrate and fulfill God’s mercy
  - c. Nowhere could we get so clear an outline to follow - we are also here to demonstrate (prove) God’s truthfulness and mercy

- B. His pre-planned purpose was, as mentioned, two-fold - vs. 8-12
1. To the "circumcision" (Jews) His life and coming were confirmation of God's truth
    - a. As God's servants this is to be one of our life objectives
    - b. We are the servants of God when proving the **rightness** of God
  2. To the Gentiles to bring glory to God for His mercy
    - a. Just as it had been written concerning God's plan to be accomplished
    - b. There would be rejoicing among the Gentiles, praise of God among them, and One Who would rule of them - Christ
    - c. Christ was the promise **fulfilled** - God keeps His word!
  3. The purpose of this service was making them one - God will work out genuine unity, accomplished by His plan, based upon His work, discovered in His Word
    - a. Our accepting others is part of our servant's **attitude**
    - b. This is accomplished as we see our calling as doing the will of our master
- C. Now may the God of **This Hope** - vs. 13
1. The God that made such promises and fulfilled such promises
    - a. May He direct your hope (expectation and reliance)
    - b. May He and His words be the **source** of such hope (if it is to last)
  2. The prayer (wish) is for their "filling" in key traits
    - a. To be filled is to be covered over (to overflowing) with something
    - b. To be filled is to be crammed with something (all available space is taken)
    - c. To be filled is to be fully satisfied with something (contented with)
    - d. To be filled is to be "furnished" with all that is needed and useful
  3. This filling is to be with joy and peace as from the God of the hope illustrated earlier
    - a. Our focus on "this God of this hope" brings us "calm contentment" - joy
    - b. Our focus on "this God of this hope" brings us "quiet rest" - peace
    - c. Having these traits continually in us will make us more apt to be alert to the needs of others as we will not be obsessed with our own!
    - d. The criteria, though, is in our believing - the opposite of which is the source for our antithesis to joy, irritation and criticism, and the antithesis to peace, fretting and **moodiness**
    - e. If we "bank on" things of this world (people, money, power, reputation, etc.) we will find our joy and peace lacking, needing to be filled. Many then seek to do so at the expense of to others. Placed in a society void of these traits, is like being in a room full of mosquitos (blood-suckers, life-drainers) out for their needs only and clearly devoid of joy and peace!
  4. The purpose for such confident dependance on God
    - a. That we might abound - to superabound, be in excess - to see ourselves as we really are, being those with **more** than enough
    - b. Those who fully see they have more than enough are generous while those seeing themselves in constant need become stingy and resentful
      - This goes beyond material, but mental and spiritual
    - c. This overflowing is in Hope... expectant confidence
  5. This is being produced and worked towards in us by the Holy Spirit
    - a. We quench the Spirit when we **reason** against hope
    - b. The Spirit is grieved when we yield to despair missing the joy and peace filling opportunities placed around us daily (usually in the needs of others)
  6. "That hope is but fancy, and will deceive us, which is not fastened upon God" - MH

Psalm 18:49

Deut. 32:43

Psalm 117:1

Isa. 11:10

The need for joy based in the consistency of God is essential - Nehemiah reminded the people that "the joy of the LORD is our strength" - Neh. 8:10

## XXV. Concluding Thoughts and Challenges - 15:14-16:27

### A. Why he admonished the way he did to the Roman Christians - vs. 14-16

1. He knew their **character** (who and what they really were)
  - a. Of these traits he was “convinced” - fully persuaded to be the case
  - b. “Paul was much more interested in what people could be than in what they were. He saw faults with utter clarity, and dealt with them with utter fidelity; but all the time he was thinking not of the wretched creatures that men and women were, but of the splendid creatures they might be.” Barclay
2. That they were “full of goodness” - kindness and benevolence (gracious)
  - a. The “kinder” we are the more apt others are to be honest with us regarding our needs. The opposite is also true that others will be less likely to deal with us **honestly** in light of our needs
  - b. Our own graciousness can even be a benefit to us!
3. That they were “filled with knowledge” - well instructed and taught
  - a. The well-informed are ready and in need of challenge
  - b. It is a misconception to believe that education leads to freedom from admonishment and challenge (we are always to be learning)
4. That they were qualified and able to “admonish one another” - challenge
  - a. Much of our learning will be used with the purpose to **share**
  - b. God never teaches us something for **exclusive** use!
5. Paul admits he has written “very boldly” to them on some points - vs. 15
  - a. The boldness was in reminding them of things they had heard and learned before
  - b. The bulk of our education throughout life will be “rehearsals” of what we have learned before and have either lost sight and focus or heart
  - c. This is our source of “perseverance” and “encouragement” - vs. 4
  - d. So much of revival to the older believer is remembering - maybe we should sing “**Remind** us again” in conjunction with “Revive Us Again”!
  - e. The admonition given to the church of Ephesus in Rev. 2 was for them to “remember from where you have fallen and repent and to the first works”
6. Paul wrote like this because of his calling as a “public servant” for Christ - vs. 16
  - a. We, as he, can speak boldly when we are assured we speak God’s word
  - b. If we appeal to our own authority for courage of speech we will soon find ourselves lacking in proper influence and effectiveness - we carry no genuine credentials of eternal value in and of ourselves
  - c. We minister from grace above all - above authority, education and even opportunity
7. And, the overall purpose was not for them but for God’s work
  - a. Many believe the primary motivation behind ministry is the good of others while, in fact, it is the glorying and purposes of God we seek, even if perceived to be **offensive**
  - b. Many will “skirt” the truth being convinced it will be offensive to the hearers. This is not to be our motivation as it places the recipient above the sender
  - c. He acted as a priest and his offering would be these “Gentiles” to God
  - d. We strive to motivate and influence others to dedication and obedience for God’s sake above theirs or ours
  - e. Paul’s “sacrifice” or “offering” would be their favorability of action by the Holy Spirit before God - this also should be our goal

*Love hopes and believes “all things”*

*So much of our reading, studying and listening should not just be fore learning but, as it were, refreshers and reminders of what we once knew, felt and were challenged with - this is the source of stamina!*

|| Pet. 1:12

*We must be in a continual state of remembering Who we serve. If people, we will miss what is most important. If God, others may find offence but what must be done and said will be done and said without much undue reference to earthly consequences*

Our goal in exhortation and admonishing is to show it coming from God's words not our opinions and estimations - we do not want "man followers" nor those disobedient because they do not see God as the giver of challenge and instruction

f. The motive was that the "sacrifice" be pleasing to God - this is not done for self fulfillment (primarily) but our fulfillment is to be sought and found in our efforts (of obedience) being pleasing to God and our confidence in the Holy Spirit to sanctify it/them (set them properly apart) for God's use and glory - His work, His timing, His purpose

g. He told them what he did and spoke boldly because of his call of God to do so

B. The righteous constraints that lead to **proper** and righteous boasting - vs. 17-19

1. It was in what was right and true that he could boast without pretense

Calvin — • "The truth itself affords me such cause for glorying, that I have no need to seek false praises, or those of another, I am content with such as are true"

2. It is in or by Christ Jesus that Paul found his boasting - and that in all the things related to the workings of God - not Paul or any other **man** and organization

As Spurgeon mentioned that if God called him to be a minister of the Gospel why would he stoop to be the King of England

a. It is the highest privilege to serve God in any capacity, not measured of man for greatness, for the "smallest" use of God in and with us surpasses the highest aspirations of the whole of mankind!

b. This is a key element in our service for God - it must not be overlooked

3. How good is our accounting and recounting of the Works of God at work?

a. Is this our **drive** in life to see God using us in His strength?

b. If asked to boast of God's most recent workings how far back would we need to go to bring this up and how long would it take us to "pull this up"?

c. With all the things vying for our attention, admiration, and boasting we must remain alert to what truly **captures** our hearts and affection

Who or what gets the bulk of our boastings?

4. His working is to be the source of our boastings

a. We should be watchful to see much of His workings in our weaknesses

b. As Paul "gloried" in his weaknesses knowing that God's strength is found to be "completed" in his weaknesses - II Cor. 12:9-10

c. And all things "pertaining" to and in accordance with God

5. Paul would not presume to speak positively of himself without clarifying the source

a. Literally "I would not dare" to speak without this "governor"

b. Paul also would not "dare" to speak as is so often called "evangelistically" - many exaggerate on things either to make themselves look better and to avoid embarrassment or because they do not know how to appropriately boast in God's working

c. Since things did happen why share anything false? God does not **need** our coming to the **defense** of His glory

6. Anything in the positive was a result of His working "through me" - channels only!

a. With Paul, it was the obedience of these Gentiles

b. This obedience, as any true obedience, was evidenced in consent (word) and then in action (deed) - many will obey in word and will not follow through

c. This statement demonstrates the core focus of our ministry to others - we see the working of God in us when we consent and act and when we are used to cause others to consent and act

7. These changes took place through differing "tools" - vs. 19

a. One, as mentioned here, was "signs and wonders" - the miraculous

b. We must be careful, though, not to limit the miraculous to healings and visions and the like as the miraculous is also seen in the conversion of sinners, conquering of habits and tendencies, and restoring of relationships (mainly with God)

There will always be tendencies for people to seek the miraculous over faith. Miracles and signs were meant to lead to faith not to lead to a life needing "miraculous fixes" to meet a needed addiction

As we are to strive to be thorough in our callings and responsibilities

- c. These "signs and wonders" were performed by the power of God's Spirit - this is clarified also as there were others and had been others performing what appeared to be miraculous but were not of God
- d. Many would see wonders but they were "signs" leading those who saw them as such to greater faith in the source, not in more miracles
- e. The changes in the Gentiles also took place through a "thorough" ministry
- f. Paul was diligent as God will always use diligence based in the faith of following and obeying our God-given "labors" (opportunities)
- g. The Gospel was preached "fully" - complete in location (wherever he was he shared) and in content (the message was complete) not being "watered-down" for "comfort" to the hearers

C. A busy schedule and yet a drive to encourage more - vs. 20-24

- 1. Often, when faced with a busy schedule, we will look to drop "opportunities" of ministry to "free-up" the schedule
  - a. Paul, though, was looking to get to Rome on his way to Spain
  - b. He was explaining why he had not been able to visit them up to this point
- 2. His calling was to lay a foundational work wherever he went first (as an Apostle)
  - a. When he mentions in verse 20 that he did not desire to build upon another man's foundation, he was not setting precedence for future ministries but was clarifying his call. This type of work took priority over all others first
  - b. This he "aspired" to - to be eager to be thus honored to pioneer the work
  - c. We must be careful to see the honor in our being called to the work more than the work itself. The master plans what must be done and the servant finds satisfaction in the doing of whatever he is told!
  - d. **Trouble comes when we compare "works" over callings**
- 3. He aspired to be the first to tell, fitting with Isa. 52:15
  - a. They who had not heard will see and they who had not understood will understand - the ministry of "enlightenment" still pivoting on the Spirit
  - b. This should also be our desire to be used to enlighten others
  - c. This can also be used to steer our thinking away from the notion that someone else needs to forge the path for us before we can act. We will all be called to act in a "pioneerish" fashion at some point
  - d. A pioneer was such because they pursued a direction/path that others of their persuasion/background had not forged and it was new to them - such it is with us. We act as a pioneer when we step out in faith in areas we are not familiar or secure in our frame of reference
- 4. Now, having fulfilled what had to be done (urgency) Rome was a soon stop - vs. 22-24
  - a. He was so busy with what had to be done it stopped him from coming - his not visiting with them was not lack of desire
  - b. He was careful to explain his absence, wanting them to be encouraged
  - c. On verse 23 RWP reads, "Surprising frankness that the average preacher would hardly use on such a matter. Paul is now free to come to Rome because there is no demand for him where he is."
  - d. His drive was to go where he was needed not where he would be most comfortable and secure - as our drive and prayer should be to be placed where we could be most used for God's purposes
  - e. We often act/think as though we can truly "settle" while on this earth

The Caller is more important than the call and the call is more important than the work and the work is more important than the worker

The word for "aspired" or "strive" is φιλοτιμουμενον having the idea of being fond of what is a genuine value so much so that it is sought eagerly

Communication is key to keeping relationships maintained and without assumed offenses

Php 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. (KJV)

- f. Overall, though, Rome was still just a “stop” not the “target” - need needs to be the determining factor that outweighs personal comfort
- g. This concept need to be understood by other also - that if others have a greater need we defer attention and focus away from ourselves willingly and supportively, seeing the need of the other as of greater importance
- h. Notice also that Paul was able to assume his freedom to “impose” - he would be helped on his way there “by you.”
- i. He would be on his way after he was “somewhat filled” with their company - this gracious statement was to communicate that there would not be enough time to get as much as would be desired

D. Paul was “going” (always) in order to serve - vs. 25-29

- 1. Again, this is the highest of calling to serve the Lord and in the process be serving His “saints”
- 2. One of the fundamental reasons for his trip was to meet the practical needs of the Christians in Jerusalem in the midst of their persecutions
  - a. A collection had been started to meet their physical needs
  - b. In verse 27 in the KJV it calls these their “carnal” needs simply referring to their being physical (of this world) and not spiritual needs
- 3. This was not started at Paul’s admonition but was started with the desire to do so by the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia
  - a. It “pleased” them to do so - literally they thought it was a good idea
  - b. They saw how they could meet a need which should always been on our “scope” as to what we look for with excitement
- 4. The collection was a form of “fellowship” - “contribution/“partnership”
  - a. As mentioned in verse 27 they had a type of debt to these Christians
  - b. For since these Gentiles have “partnered” in the spiritual things (for their good) should they not also partner in the physical needs of their brothers?
  - c. Their debt to these Jewish Christians was found in how God used them to bring the Truth which was of greater value than their possessions
- 5. Part of the heart of a believer is the partnership we recognize with one another

The common bragging (as if “fanatics”) on our Father

- a. We are family in Christ and seek the same goal of God’s glory
- b. The debt of love we know we have for one another in how God uses others for our good to “edification” (built up in faith toward God)
- c. Think of the monetary debt we would owe if we were made to pay for the treasures freely given to us now!
- d. “For the Gentile converts who have shared their spiritual blessings are in duty bound to minister to them in the things of this world.” (TCNT)
- e. We must be careful not to use the world’s system of values to determine the true scope of our “debts” - seeing the hand of God at work behind the lives of others and His hand using them in any way to affect change in us will cause us to place a higher estimated value on them

6. “I will finish this” and will “seal” it - vs. 28

- a. Paul would fulfill his duty even at the “risk” of personal injury - Jerusalem would be dangerous to him but he was resolved to finish what he had promised
- b. He would, as it were” place his seal on this “fruit” - this gift would serve as evidence to the Christian Jews in Jerusalem of God’s working; His fruit
- c. This would be key in uniting the Jewish Christians with the Gentile Christians as meeting needs usually brings a oneness of heart

proof

Unity of heart comes as one invests and the other is encouraged

7. What should be expected when believers “come together” - vs. 29

- a. “And I know” (εἶδω) - as if to say I am **certain** to see
- b. The “fullness of the blessing of Christ” will be with them/him
- c. It will be a beneficial time for all - a time to look forward to as we all should because we are coming in from the “fray” of the world into a place of **retreat** and refreshment with one another in our faith in Christ
- d. “...Paul sees the Roman congregation without troubles and harassments, like a lovely, quiet harbor; he sees himself storm-tossed and battling during the period ahead of him and longs to reach Rome, the quiet haven, to drop anchor there a while. To reach this rest amid friends, in undisturbed fellowship, for this Paul’s soul longed. He had left Ephesus in an uproar (Acts 20:1); He had twice written to Corinth on a number of disturbing questions; he had written sharply to the Galatian churches; he tells us what he was facing. Rest, rest, was his soul’s longing.” Lenski
- e. As in Rom. 1:11-12 the blessings would be mutual - coming to give “gifts” and be encouraged himself - the two-fold **purpose** of church (fellowship)
- f. “And this shall continue, until we all attain to that unity which is given by faith and by a fuller knowledge of the Son of God; until we reach the ideal man--the full standard of the perfection of the Christ.” (TCNT) - Eph. 4:13

Christian fellowship is more than Christians fellowshiping; we are builders, edifying one another; motivational speakers stirring one another in the “race” set before us and physicians repairing and restoring our wounded

The two previous verses list ministerial gifts (positions) given to the church to produce this

E. Strive together with me - vs. 30-33

1. Literally, now I invite/ask you to come **next** to me in the conflict (παρακαλῶ)
  - This is the same word used for the Holy Spirit in John 16 - the Comforter
2. So often, God will place us around others in conflict for us to join the “battle”
  - a. It is one of the most encouraging things we can do with/for each other is to **stand** with them in the conflict or struggle
  - b. This is one of the purposes of prayer, as seen in these verses, that we are standing with them before God and in the expression of the burden - clearly, to express the burden sincerely we must know them (get to know them) and develop a burden for them before we can share the burden with them!
3. The term for “strive together” is συναγωνισασθαι- struggle/agonize with me
  - a. Why would we voluntarily take on and share the struggles of another believer?
  - b. “By our Lord Jesus Christ” - by His example and for His purpose - He is our Lord and therefore we serve His servants (one another) in their work for the Master - we are all a part of His cause and at times, His “cause”
  - c. “By the love of the Spirit” - the common love for each other by our love for God - we love one another because God loves us (the “one anothers”)
4. The agonizing striving together is in prayer in this instance (prayers to God)
  - a. Our burdens for one another are heightened when we “discuss” one another before God and “discuss” their circumstances
  - b. This enables us to place our focus, no matter the results, properly on the God of the universe, **Ruler** over all
  - c. Prayers for others also assist in keeping our focus set on God’s divine “appointments” to join in the struggle or to share in the load when He brings the opportunity
  - d. Praying to the Lord for a cause brings us into the cause
5. The specifics were answered as asked by Paul
  - a. To be delivered from the “disobedient” in Judea (those seeking his life)

Again, so much of life is our perspective. God answered Paul's request but in a far more significant way that was most likely anticipated

The peace of God surpasses our ability to reason it out! - Php. 4:7

Phoebe was a faithful servant to the church at large, serving in any capacity needed at the time

Christian service should produce in us a sense of mutual debt

There is no greater expression of love than to lay our life down for another in life or in death - John 15:13

We may and ultimately should have an affection for people we may never meet only because of the difference they played on those God uses and places directly around us

- b. In Acts 21-23 we see that Paul was delivered (his life was saved) from those plotting to kill him while in Jerusalem
  - c. He also prayed that his "service for Jerusalem" would be deemed acceptable
  - d. This was the case as explained in Acts 21:19-20
6. He did make it to Rome, though it was not necessarily in joy and refreshing
- a. The joy would be in their encouragement in the midst of his imprisonment
  - c. The refreshment would be deemed so in **comparison** to his circumstances
7. His salutation - "May the God of peace be with you all"
- a. The God of inner peace, knowing, through this teaching, they have peace with God through the work of Christ
  - b. The God that will bring peace between the believing Jews and Gentiles
  - c. That God that brings peace in the **midst** of turmoil - as illustrated throughout Romans, one way this will be accomplished is a knowledge of the truth, which knowing, alters permanently life's perspective in us allowing us to see properly the purpose for all things and faith in our Lord Who is over all things!

#### F. The qualities of those greeted and commended - 16:1-23

1. Paul first sent commendation for Phoebe to the Romans - vs. 1-2
  - a. This was an introduction, leading us to conclude that the letter was either delivered by Phoebe or she accompanied its delivery to Rome
  - b. She was not of Rome but was from the city of Cenchrea (near Corinth)
  - c. She was literally a "deaconess" of the church - many have come to react to this term though it only means she was a servant - with the term "deacon" coming to represent an authority in modern day churches, it is clear to see why many hesitate at the term. Though, in its proper usage, it is perfectly correct
  - d. Either way, she is commended to them as a servant of the church
  - e. They are instructed to receive her as is "worthy of saints" - "Applied to Phoebe, it means probably that she had shown great kindness in various ways to the apostle, and to other Christians; probably by receiving them into her house; by administering to the sick, etc. Such persons have a claim on the respect and Christian attentions of others." Barnes
  - f. Give her what ever assistance she needs seeing she has **done** the same
2. Greet (warmly) Priscilla and Aquila fellow workers in Christ - vs. 3
  - a. These co-laborers had literally risked their lives for his life - the idea in the terms Paul used was describing them laying out their necks on the chopping block to save his life
  - b. Paul had lived and worked with them (Acts 18:1-3) as they shared them same type of "**occupation**" in tent making
  - c. They and the churches of the Gentiles were to give thanks to them for this as this was used to directly affect them - we are not just grateful to the people who directly assist, but to those also who made it possible for the help - this makes our list of gratefulness extend much further and may involve **research** on our part!
  - d. There was also to be a greeting (welcoming) of the "church that is in their house" - one of the places churches met
    - They were active in teaching also as illustrated in Acts 18:26 where they took in Apollos and better instructed him

- e. It is believed that Aquila had not sold his house when the Jews were expelled from Rome by Claudius and that now some of the Church at Rome were meeting in his house - hardships did not deter them!
3. Epaphroditus - Paul called him “ **beloved** ” apparently a closer friend - vs. 5  
 a. He is believed to have been converted by means of Aquila and Priscilla  
 b. He was known for being the first convert from Asia
4. Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis - the hard workers - vs. 6, 12  
 a. It is not known if she was Jewish or Gentile  
 b. The word for her (Mary) work is (κοπιῶ) demonstrates **tiring** labor  
 c. Paul does not mention the type of work, just her exhausting effort
5. Andronicus and Junias - noteworthy fellow prisoners of Paul's - vs. 7  
 a. There is debate as to whether Junias was a man or woman  
 b. Either way, they were “kinsmen” meaning they were fellow Jews or even possibly distant relatives of Paul  
 c. They were clearly “fellow prisoners” (of **war** - as the term implies)  
 d. They “stood out” as being recognized by the “Apostles” at large  
 e. They were “converted” before Paul - “The apostle writes as if he envied them this priority in the faith. And, indeed, if to be “in Christ” be the most enviable human condition, the earlier the date of this blessed translation, the greater the grace of it.” JFB
6. Ampliatus, Urbanus and Stachys - friends and fellow-workers - vs. 8-9  
 a. These were “beloved” (particular friends)  
 b. As is so often the case, they were closer friends because they labored together (few things in life produce closer **friends** or fiercer enemies)
7. Apelles - the “approved” one - vs. 10  
 a. He was particularly described as someone proven to be genuine  
 b. Some trial/test must have been the tool used to “prove him” - these “tests” are for our own sakes as well
8. Those of the household of Aristobulus - vs. 10  
 a. Most likely his **slaves** (the good majority of the church)  
 b. This was the case with those “of Narcissus” vs. 11 - This fits the “priority” of God as defined by Paul in I Cor. 1 of who/what God “chooses”
9. Rufus - “a choice man in the Lord” - vs. 13  
 a. The compliment was as saying “one who stands out” among believers  
 b. Mark mentions in his gospel (directed at the Romans) that Simon of Cyrene was compelled to bear the cross for Christ up to Golgotha, and that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, most likely the same as mentioned here in Romans - see also Mk. 15:21  
 c. His mother was also greeted and Paul lovingly refers to her as his also
10. Ten more in vs. 14-15 are named though no distinction is clarified
11. Warm and personal greetings encouraged - vs. 16  
 a. “a holy kiss” - a “set apart” greeting typically done in a public setting  
 b. It would be a personal greeting (have to get **close** to do it)
- G. A final challenge and warning to these believers - vs. 17-18  
 1. I “call you to come near” as I tell you something of importance  
 • This is of significant importance for you to watch for  
 2. “keep your eye on those that cause dissensions” - disunion  
 • This disunion is against the “doctrine”

The quality of these people was not found in their social standing, gender, educations, wealth or race. They were known for what they did and were doing and by who they befriended

“a hearty handshake”

3. "Mark" them who cause "disunity" and "offenses" in competition with the doctrine (teaching) they had already learned
  - a. The disunity is literally dissension from the Truth - many would look on **this** as being disunity from being unified, which is incorrect
  - b. There is more to unity than a **determination** to get along
  - c. Our unity is to be found in and based upon the Truth, which then makes a pursuit of it and maintaining of it a top priority!
  - d. These also cause offenses which are in reality snares/traps - ways of thinking not based in faith in the Scripture but a faith focused more upon the **reasonings** of man and the uplifting of man
  - e. It is this that causes a "parallel" version of truth which runs in competition to it. There is one truth and many (and continually growing) lists of competitors vying for the attention, time and resources of the Church at large
4. The word for "hindrances/offenses" is where we get our word "scandal"
  - a. It can be likened to something like a death trap as its affects are fatal
  - b. It is of utmost danger to a church and should be fought strongly and with confidence - which is why the Ephesian elders were challenged to be on guard from such in Acts 20:28-31
  - c. "Note well that the apostolic doctrine never causes either inward or outward rents in the church, either division of mind or schism in communication and fellowship. How can it when it is ever the same? Being one, it unifies, holds in unity. When those who hold this doctrine firmly reject those who refuse to hold it or some part of it, they cause no division but prevent division by not giving room to those who do divide and disunite."
5. The instruction is for us to disassociate from them (avoid them) - if there is ever a reason to part ways with other professing believers it is over the Scripture and its truths; if we remain unified at the cost of compromising Truth, our underlying **purpose** is compromised
  - "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;" (KJV) Titus 3:10
6. Why? For these are such that are not serving as "slaves" to Christ - vs. 18
  - a. They are those seeking to serve their own **appetites** (belly)
  - b. They are driven by what is to them considered "palatable" though the solid truth of Scripture will often be difficult to "swallow"
  - c. One devoted to their own appetites will not be likely to stay close to the Truth as it is often divisive and will cause the bearer grief with others
7. They set out with "smooth" words easy to hear and uplifting to the heart - they are most often one-sided in their approach to the Truth (as was the devil)
  - a. The simple minded, unsuspecting fall for the trap and view strict truth seekers as **narrow**-minded and lacking in graciousness
  - b. The simple trust the nature of man and will follow those who speak with confidence and will not seek to verify what is being taught; thus they are so often ensnared in to mindsets that contradict Scripture and **compete** with faith
  - c. "A little special attention, or promise of an office, or commendation for talents or acquirements, will secure many to the purposes of party, whom no regard for truth or orthodoxy could influence a moment." Barnes

Solid truth accomplishes 2 things: it unifies the church and offends and separates (out) dissenters, as it was meant to do!

Lenski —

This is why it is so essential the focus be upon the message and not the messenger; we were never intended to become "groupies" of men but seekers of THE Truth

H. The reason to stay on focus regarding what they have been taught - vs. 19

1. The good reason - a report was out of their "obedience"
  - a. They were known for not only their **faith** but for their obedient spirit
  - b. They were submissive in their approach to learning the Truth
  - c. Others learn to serve their own agenda - their fight, their glory
  - d. Others learn to serve best - they are convinced of their purpose and seek ways to enhance and improve their **pursuit** of it
2. The "bad" reason for the warning - there are those with their persuasive speech that will come to take advantage of such a "cooperative group"
  - a. There are those who feed on others willing to be led
  - b. Beware when you have a reputation of cooperation with being taught as others will come just to be "the boss" or "dictators" of lives
3. Paul was encouraged at this broad-reaching reputation - we also should be known as submitters to Truth and as being those who incorporate it into our living, making our life surround the Truth not the Truth fit conveniently into a "life-corner"
4. Pre-planned brilliance and pre-planned ignorance
  - a. "I want you to be wise" - in the "good" - literally that which is "truly good"
    - It has been proven to be good and having handled scriptural scrutiny it becomes what we set our thinking to be "well-**versed**" in
  - b. The desire is that they/we "saturate" our minds with the Word of God
    - (1). This will be a purposed discipline - the pursuit of learning the Good
    - (2). Knowing the ease of which we stray of the "fine-line" of Truth, we become urgent in our approach to stay "balance" and straight
  - c. I want you to be "harmless" when it comes to what is evil - in the context it is more than evil in general, it is false teaching
    - (1). This is the same word as Christ used in Mt. 11:16 - "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."
    - (2). We would be no threat of evil to others (sources of damaging error)
    - (3). Be as "men" in understanding and as "children" in malice - I Cor. 14:20
  - d. Our goal is also not the finding of fault in others but stirring with the Truth

I. And the God of Peace will accomplish the goal - vs. 20

1. There will be those of Satan who will seek to influence the "flock"
  - a. Satan being the devil's name as the accuser/ **slanderer**
  - b. Accusers often use partial truths to skewed truth to "convict"
  - c. The God of Peace brings the Gospel of peace crushing with Truth the antics and purposes of this accuser and all his accusers to come
2. The God of Peace will crush deceivers, and this is how peace is maintained
  - a. Many see peace as finding its power in compromise - while this may be true in human relationships it is wrong in relation to Truth
  - b. Peace is accomplished when the truth (of any matter) is faced openly and dealt with lawfully - all this God has done and is dictated in His Gospel
3. We are not given to despair over the attacks of the enemy not his apparent "victories" as we know that, as it were, shortly he and all he stands for will be **crushed** by the God of true peace
  - a. This crushing will be under "our feet" - we will be used as the Romans were
  - b. As in Eph. 6 we are equipped as a soldier for battle with our "armor"

There are those with dogma based upon tradition and others based upon their forceful personalities - neither are open to true scriptural scrutiny and seek only blind-submitters whose faith is based on impression

Be careful little mind what you learn - we must be cautious around man's philosophies and traditions becoming ingrained in our thinking as absolute - Col. 2:8

Many Christians become defeated in their thinking because they are unfamiliar with their standing with God and are all too familiar with the accusations of Satan and his manipulation of an ungoverned conscience

## XXVI. The Fundamentals - Review of Romans

### A. The just shall live by faith - Rom. 1:16-17

1. Those who will truly be just (justified as if there were no sin at all) will become so by means of faith and not by works of **personal** righteousness
2. This is why Paul was unashamed of the Gospel - this is where God's righteousness (the means to obtain it) is revealed, making it truly "good news"
  - It is "from faith to faith" - begins and **ends** with faith
3. Faith is a confident perspective without needing full "proof" - I do not currently see the outcome but I expect it based upon the one in whom I place my confidence
  - a. It is a confident **reliance** upon another
  - b. It is the picture of not relying on self and self-effort
4. This is actually the turning off point we will have with many differing beliefs
  - a. We strive to place our full reliance upon the work of Christ alone for our salvation while others will add to their "faith" their works and assistance to the process
  - b. It will take genuine faith to rely to this degree and to accept with full assurance the teachings throughout Romans
  - c. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." Gal. 3:11
5. All else will pivot on this point of full reliance - if we lose sight of this foundation, our belief system will become adulterated with "me" and what I can or must do in the **work** of my salvation

They will "live" and find the salvation of their souls and will "live" day to day founded on this faith in the faith

### B. God's wrath is directed at humanism - Rom. 1:18-32

1. At its core, humanism is the belief that life is about/for us
  - a. It is evidenced in its fight to "hold down" (restrain/forbid) the Truth
  - b. It is the drive to maintain a self-**servicing** belief system (of any kind)
  - c. Man (we) become the standard of measurement and our intellect, perspectives, feelings and the like become the established authorities all above faith in the good news of God's saving work
  - d. Humanism is the fear (worship/reverence) of man/self over the fear of God
2. Man, without God's intervention, will degrade in his thinking and become unable to think correctly (reprobate mind) and his self-gratification goals will lead to perversion of his design
3. Man will degrade to a point of loving what is **against** God
4. Humanism refuses to submit to faith in God and His work/ways and glorifies faith in man and his works and ways

God is the creator of all and all is for Him

### C. There is no "respect of persons" with God - Rom. 2:11

1. God is not interested in our work for Him but is only interested in His work in us
2. There will arise groups who measure themselves among themselves defining their own standards of righteousness and in the process despising the "riches of His goodness and forbearance.." not knowing that it is the goodness of God that leads us to repent (change of direction/perspective)
3. Our thoughts, ideas and philosophies are not intimidating nor impressive to God
  - How can an omniscient and all-powerful One be ever in any type of awe of us?
4. Based upon this, neither should we be "respector of persons" in the sense of using man's standards to rank people above the "honor" they are due - God must always be seen as the "**first** cause" and man as responder, reactor or receiver

D. All will perish with or without the Law - Rom. 2:12-13

1. The problem is found in the word “**sinned**” in vs. 12
  - a. They sinned without having the Law and will perish
  - b. But those having the Law and having sinned under it will be judged and condemned under that Law
2. Those living under the Law would need to be true “keepers” - vs. 13
  - a. It is not enough to know the perfect standard of the Law
  - b. The **entire** Law would need to be kept to be used to justify
3. Sin is anything done contrary to God, His nature and character and the Law was a definer/identifier of these characteristics and man’s inadequacies to live up to such a standard
4. Sin is the problem and the Law is incapable of dealing with sin in any way other than in the **declaration** of condemnation and judgement
5. If one could keep the Law without having or knowing the Law they would be better than one having the Law and not following it - 2:26-29

One of the key points is to demonstrate that the Law does not save and that security found in knowing the Law was a false sense of security

E. God is always right/perfect in what He does, allows and judges - Rom. 3:1-8

1. Even if it appears that God’s plan is failing it is not and should not ever be entertained as though it is possible - this is the antithesis to faith
2. If those calling themselves “God’s people” are found unfaithful this does not prove God to be unfaithful in His Word! - *or at all*
3. One of our chief fundamentals is, “Let God be found to be true and every man a liar” in comparison to God - vs. 4
4. So, whenever I see God to be wrong, I am **wrong**!
5. Man’s attempts at finding fault/flaw with God is to seek to deny His authority to judge the world - vs. 6

F. Man is totally **depraved** thus totally helpless - Rom. 3:10-19

1. There is not even on “righteous” person - no one is just or innocent - vs. 10
2. There is not even one who understands their situation truly - they cannot literally “put things together” (without God’s intervention) - vs. 11
3. There is not even one who seeks God - truly seeking God and who He is - many seek a God of their own making but abhor the concept of the Almighty God
  - Left to ourselves we will not nor would we want to seek after God and His salvation - we are by our sin nature **enemies** of God
4. All have “turned aside” - we have “missed the mark” and that deliberately - vs. 12
  - The picture is of turning away from something that disgusts us (as we turn to that which disgusts God)
5. With this we have become “depraved”, spoiled, useless - without value thus something that would normally be discarded/thrown away
6. There are not enough to add up to one among us who does what is truly good
  - a. This is the thoroughness of sin in that not only have all sinned but our sin has affected all parts of our being, even to our “righteousness”
  - b. So even our righteousness is filthy before God - it is **infected**
7. This depravity is revealed in all that comes out of us
8. In our state of being an enemy “there is not fear of God”
9. With the revealing of the Law, we are proven as those who must be held accountable to God
10. Depraved man must not look to the Law for salvation because it cannot justify anything of the flesh (and all its deeds no matter how well intended!)

Depraved - “having the nature of vice; hopelessly bad; morally corrupt”

The Law is the standard of comparison not our own societal concoction of moral superiority

We are a lost cause in our own hands and best of wisdom

**Opening Scenario – Romans 1-3**

**The Gospel  
Rom. 1:16-17**

The power of God to  
salvation

The Just Shall  
Live By Faith

Reasoning versus Faith

Mankind Suppresses  
Truth in  
Unrighteousness

**HUMANISM**

Immorality  
1:18-32

“Moral” man-made self-  
righteousness  
2:1-16

**Go  
resp  
pe**

Observation (walks by sight)

Rom. 3:3

God's people  
are unfaithful  
so God must  
be unfaithful!  
God must be  
wrong.



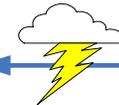
Rejects

**God's  
Answer**



I must be  
better than  
they are!

Rejects



**TRUTH**

There is no righteous person  
All have sinned

**Helpless/Hopeless**

No one understands  
No one seeks God  
All have turned away  
Their speech leads to d  
Destruction and misery  
No fear of God

Objector

Where's the  
boasting?  
Where's my  
work?

**Justification as a gift**

**Propitiation (satisfying the demand) with blood**

“That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” - Rom. 3:26

**God Fulfilling His Law Perfectly and Publicly**

Romans 3:24-26

- G. The work of salvation is totally God's work imparted through faith - 3:21-31
1. It will be apart from the Law/law - as in 3:20 by no one will be justified (declared and rendered righteous) - the law demonstrates our guilt before God
    - a. Since the Law condemns us before God, salvation will need to come another way
    - b. We will need to obtain "God's righteousness" another way
  2. Salvation is a gift! - 3:24
    - a. Salvation is our being declared/made righteous (justified) before God as a gift by means of grace (the gift is wholly undeserved on our part) through the redeeming (paying a ransom price) work of Christ
    - b. It is "displayed publicly" by God as evidence of His own work, fulfilling His own Law perfectly as having paid the price demanded by the Law
  3. "That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" - vs. 26
  4. So there is no "boasting" on the part of the "saved" - vs. 27
    - We are saved by a "law" of faith not of works
  5. Man, as helpless as he is, "dead in trespasses and sins" has no other hope but that the work for their saving (quickenings) be done for them
- H. Man is justified before God by means of faith (alone!) not by works- chapter 4
1. Abraham is a key example of how this takes place (works its way out)
    - a. He did not have the ultimate "work" (the sign of circumcision)
    - b. Yet, when he believed God his faith was credited to him as righteousness
    - c. This was qualifying righteousness not an individual righteous act
  2. David spoke of the "blessing" on the person to whom God does not charge his sin against him but instead credits his "account" with this qualifying righteousness
  3. If works come to play in the scenario at all (even the seemingly smallest of works) then salvation would be partly of debt on God's part and not of grace
  4. Christ was "delivered up" on account of our sins as was raised up for our justification (He lived the perfect life (fulfilled the Law) and was offered on our behalf
- I. As justified by faith, we have peace with God (it is a "done deal") - chapter 5
1. Since we have peace with God and we know how it was obtained, why would we harbor doubts of losing the peace with God because of our works when we did not obtain it by our works?
  2. We are righteous before God through Christ - sin no longer has power/ability to keep us from God
  3. We are no longer "dealt with" in accordance with our sins but simply in accordance with our needs (our growth - sanctification)
    - a. This is how our perspective of tribulations, patience and the like is changed
    - b. We now can see the "love of God" continually at work in our hearts
  4. This will not change!! - seeing as how God did all this on our behalf while we were enemies, why, now that we are His redeemed, would we consider that God is against us and will turn on us because we are not practically perfect? - vs. 6-7
  5. Learn how God worked this out so it is not doubted
    - a. Through one man sin entered the world and is upon all for all sinned (representatively in Adam) - for even before the Law people died as so do infants - we are all guilty of the sin of Adam - see also vs. 18-19
    - b. In the same way, the righteousness of Christ can be upon us through the "one man" Christ - "many" will be "made righteous"

Whether or not we perceive it, our sin is greater than we realize as shown under the scope of the Law so our need of Grace and its application on us will be above our realization and comprehension!

6. The depth of sin is magnified with the Law is overcome with Grace! - vs. 20
  - a. The Law was used to magnify sin for what it truly is in detail
  - b. If man tries to use it to demonstrate his righteousness it cannot succeed) or be **allowed** to seem to succeed!
  - c. It (the Law) shows our enmity with God so the Grace of God can demonstrate His mercy
  - d. The grace of God will **always** be in greater abundance than our sin
7. So, grace "reigns" rather than required death through the Law solely through the work of Christ and His righteousness on our behalf - no exceptions!
8. So, if it is solely His work on our behalf performed for us while we were His enemies how possibly can it be taken from us or given up by us when we are His children and heirs?
- J. Those in Christ are alive "to God" no longer slaves to sin - chapter 6
  1. Should/will believers continue in sin so God's grace will be "spent to the max"?
    - a. We do not think this way as it is not who we **truly** are!
    - b. We, *being who WE are* (in Christ) cannot *being who we are*
    - c. It is not a question if we will or if we can we, *being who we are*, will not
  2. The "old condemned man" is dead having been crucified with Christ
    - a. This was done so that we would no longer be the slaves to sin to obey its "rule" or face its ultimate judgment from God
    - b. This was to make our "body of sin" rendered useless (done away with)
    - c. Our bodies are not who we are neither do they **dictate** who we are
  3. Believers must accept and realize who they are in Christ
    - a. Alive to God - had having been made alive our lives (living) belongs to Him
    - b. As having been dead in sin and now made alive to God (thus from sin) I no longer live under the jurisdiction of sin
    - c. Our goal is a good "reckoning" (accounting) system keeping constant "track" of who we are, what we have in Christ, and how we are to "spend" His grace
  4. Sin used to reign over us using the law as its condemning tool
    - a. Having the Law fulfilled in Christ I am freed from its condemnation
    - b. Being in Christ I live under the realm of Grace - God's constant goodness
  5. It is proof, that to whoever or whatever we yield our "members" (all the parts that make us up) we are its slave/servant
    - a. It is an identifier of who we are NOT **making** us who we are!
    - b. There fore, being in Christ we see (and come to see) our members belong to God as our life belongs to Him (purchased in Christ)
    - c. This the term "slaves to righteousness" being under an extremely benevolent master especially in light of our former master
  6. So, in light of these facts, we have never been **free** (our own)
    - a. Just as we were obligated to sin before now we are graciously obligated to righteousness (to God) we "derive our benefit" resulting in eternal life
    - b. The "wages" that come from a life in service to sin is death but God's gift (resulting from grace) is eternal life through the work of Christ
  7. Antinomianism is never a threat to those who are truly in Christ
    - a. These passages do not say that we never sin, but that sin is no longer our master and dictator of life
    - b. We will never be those who live in sin (as defined by it) because it is not who we really are - I John 2:19

8. As the Romans, we become “conformed to that form of teaching to which we have been committed” - 6:17
- This again explains the vital need to be cautious what we learn and how/ what we are taught - it will “**conform**” us to its mold
  - Satan/the enemy would have us believe we are still (in varying degrees) the slaves to sin and not the slaves to righteousness
  - What we are taught sets the guides for our reckoning/accounting skills
- K. Being in Christ one is freed from the jurisdiction of the judgement of the Law - 7:1-13
- As a wife is under the “law” of her husband as long as he lives
    - We (as the figurative wife) were the ones who **died** with Christ
    - Being in this new “realm” we were joined to another (Christ) lawfully
    - There is no illegitimacy in this relationship!
  - A believer is freed to serve/fulfill (go about it) the spirit (purpose) of the Law not bound to the letter of the Law (the externals)
  - The Law of God is not and was not evil - man in sin is!
  - The Law was used to reveal this (there is more than the externals which need to be kept) We, initially, are evil/sinful to the core and laws such as “thou shalt not covet” deal with the heart revealing truly who we are before God more than who we are before men
  - The moral law of God now can serve as a genuine guide for the believer not as an ominous **judge** waiting for failure and striking us down
  - This slavery to righteousness is our first true taste of **freedom**!
- L. A Christian will sin but sin does not fit who they really are - 7:14-25
- For the believer, there will be a lifelong conflict with the remnants of the old man
  - There is the inner man - the real me, in conflict with the “law of sin” in my “members” striving to make me its prisoner again
    - This is speaking of a believer/believers - no where does this indicate the loss of position in Christ because of the sin
    - This realm of sin is only in my bodily members not my “inner man”
  - So, when it is stated, “it is no longer I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me” he is speaking of the real “I”; the inner-man; who I really am
  - Again, our bodies are not who we really are (just a shell/tent in which the real us really resides)
  - For the true believer this is seen in our joyful concurrence with God’s law
    - I **want** to do what is truly righteous before God (the inner-man)
    - I often do what is against this desire (sin still in my physical members)
    - So, when I see myself sin I still concur with the rightness of God’s law and my innate desire to follow it - I want to!
    - This **conflict** is ongoing proof of this reality
  - We will eventually be freed from “this body of this death” through Christ
  - I will sin but will sense that it does not fit who I really am
    - So much of Christian growth is the **discovery** of who we really are
    - This is part of the sanctifying work of God in us and is evidenced in our growing change of desires for what is right and will often be seen in a greater sensitivity to our sins
  - So, as one in Christ, I will not yield the fight to sin as sin is predetermined to be ended and my inner man set free from this “tent”!

- M. We know that one “in Christ” cannot stand condemned before God - 8:1-13
1. The truest idea of 8:1 is that condemnation has been **condemned**!
  2. The Law was unable to make us righteous, only to demonstrate the opposite
    - God accomplished fulfilled righteousness through Christ
  3. So, there is no being that can take the Law of God and hold us condemned before God based upon it
    - a. We are “in Christ” so we are now judged in accordance with His righteousness
    - b. The only way we could be condemned by God is if **Christ** is condemned
    - c. This is the core source of our hope in this life and for the “next”
  4. Those “after” the flesh mind the things of the flesh while those “after” the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit - an inescapable conclusion
    - “minding” is not the cause but the **result** (indicative)
- N. We are the “adopted” children of God - 8:14-17
1. The evidence of this is our being “led by the Spirit” demonstrating our “sonship”
  2. It is not a position of “slave” as we once had but one of a slave/orphan that has been adopted in to the family with all rights, name and inheritance
    - In either context we call Him Father (abba - Hebrew or **πατηρ** - Greek)
  3. If we are His children then we are His heirs (heirs of God Himself!) and as fellow heirs with Christ
  4. This is our **unchangeable** position no matter what we see in life
- O. A believer (in Christ) will face suffering on the earth but will be maintained through hope
1. This “hope” is an expectant hope (driven by confidence in the giver of hope)
    - a. The sufferings we face are of no comparison to what is coming in glory
    - b. Even the whole of creation is described as eagerly waiting the final fulfillment of the adoption results - when sin and its influence are no longer
  2. We wait (with perseverance) for this hope to be **sight**
    - a. Hope that is seen is not hope
    - b. The believer will walk (through this life and be characterized by ) faith
- P. The Spirit of God intercedes for us throughout the trials of life - 8:26-39
1. It is a truth that we do not know how to pray as we ought
    - a. God’s spirit speaks on our behalf
    - b. This is all in perfect harmony with the will of God, not with ours
    - c. It is not an interceding to give us what we think we want but what we truly need before the perfect perception of God
  2. God causes all things to “conspire” for our good (as He knows it to be)
    - a. This is assured because we are “the called” in accordance with His purpose
    - b. We take comfort in these “all things” resting in God’s control
    - c. It is predetermined that we be conformed to the image of Christ
    - d. What is predetermined will happen without change - we, again, take comfort in this fact as we face what seem to be uncertainty in life
  3. We live life in the confidence of an **assured** destiny
    - a. We HAVE BEEN called
    - b. We HAVE BEEN predestined
    - c. We HAVE BEEN justified (declared and made righteous in Christ)
    - d. We HAVE BEEN glorified (it is as it is a “done deal”)
  4. Since God is “for us” what difference does it makes who else is against us?
    - a. He did not spare His own son for us
    - b. How, now continuing, could He not gratuitously give us all that is needed?

Q. God's plan(s) has not, does not, nor will (can) it fail - Romans 9:1-8

1. Our personal burdens do not dictate the will of God nor what He is to do
  - a. As Paul had a **natural** burden for his people
  - b. It did not change how God would deal with Israel and use them
  - c. The plan is about God not Israel; it is the demonstration of His power and glory at work, and that unalterable!
2. Man's outward assessment of God's plan working has no bearing at all as to whether or not it is working!
  - a. Skeptics will be on the lookout to assess the work of God from their vantage point
  - b. Going to God's Word reveals His plan and its perfect implementation - as Paul points out that not all who are physically born and Israelite is truly (as God defines it) but children of "the **promise**"
3. All has worked out perfectly in accordance with God's purposed design

R. The purpose and plan of all (everything) finds its source in God - Romans 9:9-33

1. Nothing happens by "chance" but precisely fits God's design and will ultimately be subservient to His purpose and His glory over all
2. God chose Jacob, one of twins, when neither had done good or bad "that God's purpose according to His choice might stand"
3. It is not based upon the one who "works" but on He who calls - vs. 11
  - a. Life was not intended to find its true glory in the works and efforts of man but in the privileged **calling** of God (efficacious)
  - b. Purpose is sought and found in the working out of the will of God and our fortune to be a participation in its outworking!
4. With God working without hindrance His will, there will be not injustice at all
  - a. There is no such thing as an **effective** opposition to the will of God
  - b. There is opposition to the moral will of God throughout mankind but not in any way and effective opposition to the predetermined will of God that is discussed in this chapter
5. God's predetermined mercy is all good - full justice would involve all in an eternal Hell while mercy is seen in His compassion on those He chooses - how is this wrong?
  - a. Man would have God obligated to save all when in reality there is no obligation to save any from among us
  - b. So, God's mercy does not pivot on "the one who wills" or the one who "runs" (strives) but **solely** on God's imparting of mercy - vs. 16
  - c. This concept as to why He chooses those He does goes beyond our knowledge and ability to know so who are we to "answer back" as if accusatory to God at what He does?
  - d. God is the only "free" one in the universe - the molder has sole freedom to do as He pleases while the thing molded will not veer from its purpose
  - e. This is the realm of God and will never be comprehended and explained by us
  - f. Man will fight this concept as it contradicts his perceived control of self-destiny, self rule and self-will
6. All was made to demonstrate God's glory which will be demonstrated to the "vessels of mercy" which "He prepared beforehand for glory"
  - a. Life is about the glory of God not the glory of man
  - b. Life is about the work of God not the work of man

Man greatly desires to take away sovereignty from God to claim control for himself - this is often sought by the attempt to demonstrate God's "failures" or lack of control over man

Humanism would have it pivot on the striving and the will either elevating the quality and quantity of the works or place the priority on the sincerity of the work; neither impress the holiness of God which is required to be fulfilled

Neither should we entertain the thought that we can

Salvation is through  
God's plan and work not  
man's ingenuity and effort

7. God's plan was to save by faith alone - 9:30-33
  - a. Those not seeking righteousness found it (the Gentiles)
  - b. Those seeking righteousness by the Law did not attain it
  - c. They did not attain it as it is only attained by faith - through the work of another, that being Christ the "Stone of Stumbling"
  - d. Religion will seek salvation through works and personal merit (earned)
  - e. Faith will find salvation in the confidence of the merit of Christ to fulfill the demands of God's holiness in the law; it is dependence versus independence
5. God's plan/actions are not dictated by the pursuits of man - 10:1-3
  1. As Paul, we will express burdens but must not allow ourselves to believe that God must or will act on them because of the level of our emotions and sincerity
  2. Biblical theology is to produce practical theology - we are governed (burdens and thoughts) by the Truth; it governs us not we it
  3. The Jews had a misdirected zeal - it was sincere but not in line with true knowledge
    - a. Traditions and "emotion evoking concepts" are often big obstacles to teaching and learning the Truth
    - b. Adding to truth (adulterating) or leaving out aspects of truth both lead to misdirection/error and neither are excused
- T. Salvation is through faith in the merits of Christ as the fulfillment of the Law - 10:4-13
  1. Christ is the fulfillment of the Law (end) - kept in full for us
  2. Salvation will be "worked out" by means of belief (faith) in Him
    - a. Confession will take place (an agreement with the Truth)
    - b. Confession will stem from the inner workings of the heart (it's real)
    - c. Salvation is not "saying the right words" but a staking of one's eternal soul upon the work of Christ on their behalf and God's acceptance of it
  3. Whoever calls upon (invoking the name of) the Lord will be saved
    - This is indicative - how it will happen
  4. God is impartial - salvation is offered to the Gentiles also (whoever)
- U. The message of Salvation will come by means of preaching the Gospel - 10:14-21
  1. Belief in the Gospel message will not be dependant on the "preacher" but will be distributed through these good news bearers
  2. As in the analogy, the good news is brought to those for whom the battle was won
  3. Having the right message does not guarantee all will heed it - as with Israel
  4. Faith will come by means of hearing the Word of God - vs. 17
    - a. The object (content) of what is heard is key - the Word
    - b. It is more than philosophy - it surpasses intellect and is received in faith
    - c. The irony is found in that hearing it produces the faith that believes it
  5. God will always be faithful and consistent; unfaithfulness will always be the fault of man
    - Rejection will always be the fault of the rejector while acceptance (in faith) the "fault" of God and His grace
  6. The message is framed as God with open arms (to whosoever) - rejection is always the fault of man
    - a. We know that salvation is the work of God (the called according to purpose)
    - b. We seek to work in harmony with His method (way) of converting His own through the declaration of the good news
    - c. We will be wrong when we try to distinguish the "elect" to determine the recipients of the message God has graciously given us

God has clarified  
salvation as His work  
and has dictated how  
it will be accomplished.  
We must not allow  
ourselves to see the  
method as being the  
actual means

- V. Do not “write off” God’s working in light of contradictory “evidence” or reasoning - 11:1-6
1. It would appear that God rejected His people since they were rejecting Him
  2. Yet, Paul himself was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin
  3. As with Elijah, just because you cannot see God at work does not mean He is not at work (even in large numbers and in many areas)
    1. Elijah thought he was the last faithful one to God in Israel
    2. Yet God had reserved for Himself 7,000 who had not compromised
  4. This is a vital fundamental to remember as many walk by what they see versus faith in God’s working in the unseen or even **seeming** contradiction
  5. So, with Israel, in Paul’s day and now, God has chosen a remnant for Himself (of Israel) and that of grace - vs. 6
  6. God must never be “measured” by man’s (our) measurements as they will always be flawed or skewed to **fit** our (limited) perspective
    - a. As illustrated at the end of chapter 10 - verse 17 stated that faith comes by hearing the Word of God
    - b. Yet, Israel heard and did not believe - just because they hear does not mean they will believe but those that do believe will do so by the Word of God
  7. So if the “cause” of God seems to be “losing” from our perspective or society’s perspective, it will **never** be the case
  8. This fundamental must never be open to doubt! - faith will welcome the challenge while realizing the rightness of God over all or in any matter may not be openly seen by us or others in our lifetime
- W. Even God’s “harshness” carries with it God’s **goodness** and rightness - 11:7-24
1. Even in God’s seeming rejection of certain people or peoples do not limit His probable and possible working to where they currently “stand”
    - a. God would (for a time) reject Israel (only a remnant being chosen)
    - b. But this “rejection” would lead to the redemption of the world
  2. As Paul stated in the beginning of chapter 10, even knowing God’s general plan for Israel and His sovereign election, he was still driven by a burden for His people
    - a. The treasures of discovering God’s working will be in all areas of life, places, circumstances and peoples
    - b. So we **look** for God at work even in the bleakest of circumstances
  3. We must never raise up our self-estimation in light of God’s negative working with others (as though we merited His favor)
    - a. God, in the illustration of the root, tree and branches, prunes certain branches off the seeming “normal” plan of things to engraft another
    - b. The focus in these verses is on the work of the farmer (His plan and knowing what He is doing) and not on the “ideal choice” of the branches from wild olive trees being grafted
  4. All hinges on God’s accepting and rejecting not on our accepting and rejecting
    - a. We must not view God working in light of us but always in light of His **perfect** perspective
    - b. Therefore, when used of God we must never be conceited but reverently grateful to have been used in such a way or to have been allowed to see what is really going on (the true truth!)
  5. We must not draw ultimate conclusions where God has not clarified or revealed His ultimate concluding - God is not finished with Israel

X. God and His plan are unchanging - Rom. 11:25-36

1. This is found in one of the often used terms to describe God - “**immutable**”
  - a. He cannot nor will He change - He is perfect and perfection cannot change!
  - b. His perspective is perfect therefore His predetermined plan is perfect
  - c. Man will think himself wise at times, thinking he has figured out the working of God - yet this mystery is explained to keep our self-estimation in place
2. “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” - vs. 29
  - a. What God gives He does not regret or “**revoke**”
  - b. What God calls to “be so” will happen (without wavering)
3. This concept (fundamental) is often called into question by man
  - a. Our frame of reference makes it look like God changes
  - b. It would take an **infinite** perspective to see it all at once
4. God set things up to demonstrate His **mercy** - vs. 32
5. God is above our thinking - we will never have Him “figured out” - vs. 33-36
  - a. His thought processes and ultimate plans are His alone
  - b. God needs no counselor!
  - c. God needs no one to **give** to Him to accomplish His will
  - d. All things are from, to and for God
6. We are always wrong when we seek to stand in judgment of God in any form!
  - a. God is not nor can be answerable to man (us)
  - b. God is unswayed with our reasoning and arguments

When seeming “regret” is used in reference to God it is in conjunction with people and their lack of consistency

Beware the fatalist perspective - that since God can work without my “work” I won’t work; or since all is forgiven, I will not strive to be holy in my living - this is a lazy, disrespectful, ignorant and self-gratifying approach not of God - disobedient!

Y. The highest “work” of the believer is submission - Rom. 12:1-8

1. Our sacrifices are ones of service in contrast to atoning sacrifices
  - a. We are the sacrifices now only living and thinking ones
  - b. The criteria of what constitutes “sacrifices” are found in what is acceptable to God and are truly “holy” (set apart for His purposes and glory)
2. Our practical holiness is found in our “transformation”
  - a. We are not here to be “conformed” to the image of this era (time)
  - b. We are being molded to the image of Christ, not the mold of the world
  - c. We seek to be submissive to God’s **molding** processes
3. Our purpose in this life is to see first hand that God’s will is good, acceptable and perfect in all ways - we are discoverers of His glory
4. Our greatest “battle” in the process will be the renewing process in our minds
  - a. Submission takes place there first
  - b. Outward obedience alone is hypocritical and will be short-lived - it will not stand the scrutiny of a genuine trial
  - c. The key is getting our thinking in the “submissive mode” versus self-will
5. We will be equipped for the work God gives!
  - a. We are gifted for tasks (not to have personal pride in what we are given)
  - b. Gifts are enablements for the work not **developed** talents

Z. Most of the outworking of our submissive work will be towards others - 12:9-21

1. All is founded on a genuine love - of God and the “brethren”
  - a. Hypocritical love will not hold up to challenge
  - b. Most of the work God has us to do will be with **people**
  - c. Most of this work will be dealing with the “problems” of others - their faults, their hurts, their inconsistencies
  - d. This type of love will require a humble selflessness to function