"CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER IN GOD'S FAMILY"

Romans 15:1-14

12-13-2020

INTRODUCTION:

***We need to genuinely take care of each other in the family of God!**

How should we take care of each other?

I. BEAR with one another (v. 1)
(A plea for patience toward each other)

II. PLEASE one another (v. 2-4)
(A plea for unselfishness toward each other)

A. The purpose for pleasing others is edification (v. 2)
B. The pattern for pleasing others is Christ (v. 3)
C. The power for pleasing others is the Scriptures (v. 4)

III. UNITE with one another (v. 5-6)
(A plea for oneness with each other)

IV. ACCEPT one another (v. 7-12)
(A plea for impartiality toward each other)

V. ADMONISH one another (v. 14)
(A plea for loving confrontation with each other)

Before you are competent to admonish others, you need to be:

A. Filled with joy and peace (stable emotions) (v. 13)
B. Filled with goodness (steadfast morals) (v. 14a)
C. Filled with Bible knowledge (spiritual intellect) (v. 14b)

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INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: of a family where all of the family members (brothers and sisters) took care of each other.

Contrary to that ideal, families today have become less close, less loving, and less patient.

Contemporary society reflects such self-centeredness quite graphically.

Most people seem to be out for themselves; with their own best interests in mind, living for # 1.

Our church is a family (Eph. 2:18-19), and like a family we need to care for one another.

In Romans 15:1-4, several statements are made to show us our duties toward <u>other</u> Christians. The emphasis in context focuses our attention away from <u>self</u> and on to others, away from living for ourselves and pleasing ourselves to living for others and pleasing others.

NOTE: Our responsibilities are toward . . . "the weak (v. 1) ...(our) neighbor (v. 2) . . . one toward another (v. 5) . . .one another (v. 7) . . . one another (v. 14)."

***We need to genuinely take care of each other in the family of God!**

How should we take care of each other?

I. <u>BEAR</u> with one another (v. 1)

(A plea for <u>patience</u> toward each other)

"We" - Paul includes himself among the strong

"Strong" - those who are spiritually mature enough to <u>know</u> their liberty in Christ (14:1, 14), and mature enough to exercise it in loving concern for their weaker brethren (14:3, 15).

"Ought" - are <u>indebted</u> (cp. Ro. 1:14); are obligated; we <u>owe</u> it!

We have no other option than to fulfill our responsibilities (duties) toward our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

"To bear" = to bear with; to put up with someone patiently.

In previous context, the patience would be toward those who would be offended or caused to stumble, if you did something that was against their conviction.

"Infirmities" - the weaknesses. Not speaking about physical infirmities, but spiritual infirmities.

Infirmities that stem from spiritual immaturity.

Those who are "weak in the faith" (14:1); those who stumble often due to immaturity (14:13, 21) (Gal. 6:1-2 - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.")

With the diversity of people in the body of Christ, differences in gifts (I Cor. 12), backgrounds, cultures, and various levels of understanding the Scriptures, we need a great deal of patience with each other.

Everyone has their own unique quirks, problems, and personalities; and strong Christians need to bear with such people.

I Thes. 5:14 - "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men."

"Charity suffereth long" (I Cor. 13:4)

It's easier to be patient when you view each other as family.

"A little girl was once carrying a baby, and someone asked, "Is he not heavy?" "No," was the reply, "he is my brother." (Thomas, p. 380).

"Not to please ourselves" - not to live to enjoy our Christian liberty at the expense of others; not to live to gratify our selfish desires (14:15, 17) at the expense of someone else's conscience.

"Not to please ourselves" - Paul himself, lived such an unselfish life - I Cor. 10:33-11:1 - "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

II. PLEASE one another (v. 2-4)
(A plea for unselfishness toward each other)

A. The purpose for pleasing others is edification (v. 2)

The "pleasing" intended by God is:

1) Not doctrinal compromise (EX: being an "ear tickler" - II Tim. 4:3-4)

2) Not to gain popular favor (EX: being a "men pleaser" - Gal. 1:10 - "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.")

3) Not to do eye service (being a hypocrite - Eph. 6:6).

Rather, the "pleasing" God is talking about is doing that which is for the spiritual well being of the other individual.

Sometimes, that which our fellow-brother needs most is loving confrontation (v. 14), not someone who will deceitfully tell him how wonderful he is (Prov. 27:6 - "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.")

"His neighbor" - a neighbor is anyone who is "next to you" within your sphere of influence (not merely the one who lives next door). A neighbor is anyone with a need (EX: Good Samaritan - Lk. 10:25-37)

"For his good" - toward his good; with a goal toward his benefit.

I Cor. 10:23-24 - "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."

"Edification" - Eng. word "edifice" which refers to a building or that which is built up).

Our goal as Christians is to find someone we can build up. We are to be on the look out for those who need help (Rom. 14:19). We are to be on the look-out for cracked lives that need spiritual plastering, crumbling people that need cement work, structurally damaged saints who have the right foundation yet have not been building on that foundation with the right materials, who need architectural advice.

It takes unselfishness to be concerned about someone else's spiritual house.

I have found that the best way to build my life spiritually is to be busy laboring to build others. (this is contrary to the world's philosophy, as Jesus confirmed through His teachings [See Mt. 20:25-28] and by his unselfish life [John 13:14-17]).

B. The pattern for pleasing others is Christ (v. 3)

We are to imitate Christ, in our dealings with other Christians.

"Pleased not himself" - the Kings of kings had every right to be waited on hand and foot, to live int he world's best luxury, and to have the notoriety of the universe.

Yet He served as the waiter (Jn. 13), He gave up luxury (Mt. 8:20), and humbled Himself (Phil. 2:5-10)

"Christ pleased not himself" - Mt. 20:28 - "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Paul is quoting Psalm 69:9, which has immediate reference to King David, but is applied to Christ who took the insults hurled at him, like David did.

"Reproaches" = insults

Christ unselfishly allowed the insults aimed at the Father to fall upon Him.

To insult Christ was to insult the Father, just as to honor Christ was the same as honoring the Father (Jn. 5:23).

Christ was insulted for reaching lowly sinners with His gospel (mt. 9:11, 11:19).

Christ was insulted for hanging on the cross to pay for the world's sin (Mk. 15:29-32; cp. Mt. 27:39-44).

I Pet. 2:23 - "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (SEE Matthew 5:11-12).

If there was ever anyone who had no right to be mistreated, maligned, wrongly accused, etc., it is the spotless, irreproachable Son of God (I Pet. 2:22).

Yet for our sakes He endured such, that we might be saved (I Pet. 2:24).

"St. John's first epistle lays great stress on Christ as our pattern. No less than six times he uses the phrase, "even as He." We are to "walk in the light, as He is in the light" (1:7). We are to "walk, even as He walked" (2:6). We are to "purify ourselves, even as He is pure" (3:3). And we are to "Love as He gave us commandment" (3:23). ". . . [Peter also speaks] of Christ "leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps" (I Pet. 2:21)" (Thomas, p. 382).

"Does a strong Christian think he is making a great sacrifice by giving up some food or drink (14:21)? Then let him measure his sacrifice by the sacrifice of Christ" (Wiersbe, p. 562).

C. The power for pleasing others is the Scriptures (v. 4)

It is God's Word that tells us who to please, how to please, and why to please our fellow brother. It is our only guide to faith and practice. Therefore, we must be diligent to apply its principles!

1) How much of God's Word applies to me? - Whatsoever things"

"All Scripture . . . is profitable for doctrine . . ." (I Tim. 3:15-16)

"Aforetime" = previously written; written beforehand (EX: the O.T. Scriptures still applied to Paul in the New Covenant).

In other words, all Scripture is for us. We can draw eternal principles, and see examples from all of the Bible and apply them to our lives today.

Though the Bible was written thousands of years ago, and though the various books were addressed to specific people (Ex. Deut. to Israel - Dt. 1:1; Luke to Theophilus - Lk. 1:3) and churches (Ex. Romans to the church at Rome - Ro. 1:7) -- It is for our learning!

2) Why does God's Word apply to me? (what is the goal of Scripture?) -- "For our learning"

For our instruction (doctrine).

The greatest source of knowledge, unsurpassed by any other book, is the Bible! This is why I give myself to studying the details of Scripture. It has all the answers to life's questions.

3) How does God's Word apply to me?

a) It gives patience (the Bible helps us to "remain under" the pressures of serving)

b) It gives comfort (the Bible helps encourage us when we are tempted to doubt whether or not its "worth it" to serve Christ).

4) What is the end result of applying God's Word to my life? -- "Hope"

I will gain confidence that my labor (in edifying others) is not in vain in the Lord - I Cor. 15:58.

III. UNITE with one another (v. 5-6)
(A plea for oneness with each other)

V. 5

NOTE: Verse 4 teaches that the Scriptures give "patience and comfort."

Verse 5 teaches that God gives "patience and comfort."

Why? The Scriptures are God's Words. (when Scripture speaks, God speaks; and God only speaks today via His written Word).

God . . . grant you to be like minded" - Only God can produce unity, and He does so by giving us patience and consolation (peace and encouragement), which are fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Patience and peacefulness are vital ingredients to provide unity.

Eph. 4:2-3 - "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"Likeminded" - to set your minds toward the same things.

God is not calling for Christian "clones" in personality, but in sharing common goals namely, each other's total well-being.

"According to Christ Jesus" = Two ideas:

God wants us to be united by:

1) Following Christ's example (Rom. 15:3, 7)
(To do as Jesus did)

2) Fulfilling Christ's desire (Jn. 17:21-23)
(To do as Jesus wants)

Rom. 12:16 - "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

"Oneness with God will lead to oneness among the brethren. When God is first, the result will be unity" (Thomas, p.381)

V. 6

Why should we be united?

In order that we may with one mind (purpose or intention) and one mouth glorify God! To glorify God is to make Him shine before the watching eyes of the world which is looking at us.

1) God is glorified when His people are heading in the same direction ("one mind" = to have the same goals and desires in life) (Mt. 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.")

"With one mind" = with one purpose, the same intention, the same desire. The same word appears in Acts showing the unity of believers - Acts 1:14, 2:46, 4:24, 5:12.

"Abraham's words to Lot are applicable today - "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. . . for we are brethren" (Gen. 13:8) (Wiersbe, p. 562).

2) God is glorified when His people are saying the same message ("one mouth" = like a grand choir, God's people blend their voices to shout to the world - "Jesus saved! Jesus is true! Jesus changes lives! Jesus cares for you! etc.)

It is a shame for God's people to "talk like the devil" (lies, vulgarity, gossip, etc.).

Believers being "one in mind" is not visible to the world unless it is outwardly expressed by the "mouth"!

SINS that disrupt unity:

--Non-commitment (to church membership and attendance)
--Gossip, slander (judging - Rom. 14)
--Pride and other forms of selfishness
--Divisiveness, discord

VIRTUES that promote unity:

--Humility (Phil. 2:2ff)

--Peace (Ph. 4:3)

--Compassion & Love

I Pet. 3:8 - "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous"

--Unselfishness

Acts 4:32 - "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

"A chain is only as strong as its weakest link" (We must all be faithful to each other and to the work of God)

"The single most common factor in creating strong family (type) bonding is shared struggle" (Gary Smalley)

"A team that sweats together, gets together"

--For any relationship to work, there must be uniting
(EX: work, sports, church, family).

--Satan fights unity! Don't let Him have a foothold in our church family.

IV. ACCEPT one another (v. 7-12)
(A plea for impartiality toward each other)

V. 7

"Receive ye" = to accept or welcome; to take ot yourself (same command as 14:1)

"One another" - Regardless of nationality or maturity - Jew & Gentile, weak & strong believers alike.

In previous context, God taught us to accept those Christians with whom we differ about disputable matters (14:1ff).

"As Christ also received us" - our Savior is the perfect example of impartiality.

In order for Jesus to receive us, we did not have to be of a particular race or have a particular ability, or prestige or live at a high economic status.

Rather, He received us:

--Regardless of race (Rom. 10:12 - "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.")

--Regardless of intellect (I Cor. 1:26 - "Not many wise")

--Regardless of ability (talent) ("Not many mighty")

--Regardless of worldly prestige (fame and notoriety; upper crust of society . . . "Not many noble")

--Regardless of economic status (SEE James 2:1-9)

If Jesus has accepted someone, who are we not to?

A question to ask yourself when trying to figure out who you can and cannot fellowship with: **"Does God fellowship with Him?**"

V. 8

In our Savior's early ministry, He continuously made statements like: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24); "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 10:5-6).

Why was His priority mission to Israel? To fulfill scripture which promised that He would bring salvation O.T. Israel.

Jesus by going to the Jew first with the Gospel message confirmed (fulfilled) the promises made to the O.T. Patriarchs.

God had made promises to Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., that He would redeem His people, that the Messiah would come to save Israel.

But God all the while knew that He would <u>not limit</u> the Messiah's atoning sacrifice to Israel, but would offer its <u>efficacy to all</u>! (I Jn. 2:2; I Tim. 2:4, 6; 4:10).

The point of verses 7 & 8 is: Christ <u>accepted</u> us (Gentiles) (v. 7), even though He was originally sent as a servant of the circumcision (Jews) (v. 8).

V. 9-12

In verses 9 - 12, Paul quotes four O.T. verses (from the LXX), which show the Gentile sharing in the Jews' blessing of salvation.

[Each quotation includes the word "Gentile" in it. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit was Paul's <u>concordance</u> in retrieving such references.]

Because of God's mercy, all believers (including Jew and Gentile) can:

1) <u>Worship</u> together (v. 9, quoting Ps. 18:49)

"Confess" = to <u>speak out the same words</u> of praise.

We share a common <u>testimony</u> and sing a common <u>song</u>.

2) <u>Rejoice</u> together (v. 10, quoting Dt. 32:43)

We share a common <u>joy</u>.

3) Praise together (v. 11, quoting Ps. 117:1)

We praise a common Lord.

4) Believe together (v. 12, quoting Is. 11:10)

We share a common faith.

V. ADMONISH one another (v. 13-14)
(A plea for loving confrontation with each other)

V. 14

"Admonish" - noutheteo - lit. to put into the mind; to confront one's thinking.

A pastor's job is to admonish the flock so that they think Biblically (I Th. 5:12).

As a man thinks, so is he.

"You are what you think."

The way you think and what you think affects every area of your life.

Your thoughts affect your emotions and your actions. Hence, Bible teaching is essential to emotional stability and Godly conduct.

The word "admonish" is used in the sense of:

1)To rebuke and 2) To instruct

1) To rebuke - to correct sinful thinking (II Th. 3:14-15 - "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, not that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

(Cp. Titus 3:10)

2) To instruct - to strengthen defective (weak) thinking

a. To remind about what may be forgotten (Acts 20:31 - Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.")

b. To warn about potential danger
(cp. Acts 20:31; I Cor. 4:14 - "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you")

c. To encourage about God's will (Col. 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.")

"Admonish one another" - The admonishing is not only the pastor's responsibility and privilege but is expected of the laymen to be involved in reciprocal admonition. In the family of God we need to verbally encourage each other.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of a friend" - Prov. 27:17

Prov. 27:6 - "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

Three prerequisites to admonishing others (three needed "fillings" that will give you a competence to Biblically instruct someone else).

In verses 13 & 14 the word "fill" ( ) occurs three times.

V. 13

You cannot give what you do not have.

Before we can impart words of encouragement to others, our lives must be "full" of something to give.

Before you are competent to admonish others, you need to be:

A. Filled with joy and peace (stable emotions) (v. 13)

1. God is the source of joy and peace (only He can fill you with such)

2. Faith is the means of joy and peace

"In believing" = Joy and peace come to us by means of our believing or faith in God's Word.

3. Hope is the result of joy and peace

"Abound" = to overflow; God wants us to be absolutely confident of our salvation. Holy Spirit empowered "hope" comes to our hearts when we have subjective faith and objective joy and peace.

God's equation - Belief produces joy and peace which results in hope.

B. Filled with goodness (steadfast morals) (v. 14a)

The reason Barnabas was such an encourager (as his name implies - "Son of Consolation") was because "He was a good man" (Acts 11:24).

Being full of goodness is the result of being full of spiritual knowledge.

Lit. "You yourselves are full of goodness having been filled with all knowledge."

Do you want to be good? Then know God's Word! Give yourself to reading it, meditating on it, and memorizing it.

C. Filled with Bible knowledge (spiritual intellect)
(v. 14b)

"All knowledge" - know the "whole counsel of God." Have a well-rounded knowledge of Scripture.

To be able to admonish others you need a balanced understanding of Scripture, knowing more than one "pet" doctrine.

We are to be encouragers!

Every Christian is to lift up those who fall, strengthen the weak, etc.

--We are to comfort those who are distressed
(II Cor. 1:3-4 - "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.")

--We are to repair (mend) those who are broken by sin (Gal. 6:1-2 - "Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.")

--We are to convert those who stray from the truth - (James 5:19-20 - "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.")

CONCLUSION: