

Our Witness to the World
Romans 15

Romans 15:1-6 (NIV)

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

I. Unity must have a high priority

Verse 5 – May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves

Zephaniah 3:9 (NIV)

Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

John 17:11 (NIV)

I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name— the name you gave me— so that they may be one as we are one.

Ephesians 4:2-6

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

II. Unity gives us our most effective Witness

John 17:20-21 (NIV)

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

III. Unity has a clearly marked pathway

- Think of Others First

Verse 1 – "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak..."

- Sacrifice Our Personal Interests

Verse 1 and 2 – "...and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

Philippians 2:2-4 (NIV)

“Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

- Be Like Jesus

Verse 3 and 5 – For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." as you follow Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

- Live by the Word

Verse 4 – “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

- Depend on His Power

Verse 5 – “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity...”

IV. Unity is a continual expression of Praise

Verse 6 and 7 – “...so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

“Scripture is unequivocal on the matter of unity. It is a matter of obedience. If we hold in high regard this Body for which Christ gave His very life, we must strive for unity, for it is the essence of the Church. The world is not looking at our tracts and rallies and telecasts and study manuals. It is looking at us and how we behave. When it fails to see the unity of the church, it fails to see the validation that Christ is indeed the Son of the living God.” -

Chuck Colson – “The Body”