

The Unity of Strong and Weak Christians, Part 5

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Romans 15:1-7.

B. The unity of the church is the concern of God the Father. (Psalm 133, Jeremiah 32:38, Ezekiel 37, Zephaniah 3:9, Zechariah 3:9, Hosea 1:11, John 10:14, 1 Corinthians 15:28, Revelation 21)

C. The unity of the church is the concern of the Son. (John 17)

D. The unity of the church is the concern of the Spirit. (Acts 2:38, 41-42, 46; 4)

E. The unity of the church is the will of the Trinity. (Ephesians 4:3, 1 Corinthians 1:10; 3; 12:12; Galatians 3:26; Philippians 1:27; 2:3; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 3:8-9; 2 John 4; 3 John 2-4)

F. One of the possible causes of disunity are relationships between strong and weak Christians.

G. Paul is emphasizing four major principles that must govern that relationship: receive one another, build up one another without offending, please one another with Christ as the example and rejoice with one another in God's plan.

H. To please one another requires several high spiritual motives.

II. Consideration of others.

A. The strong believer understands what he is free to do.

B. Those with understanding should show consideration towards weaker believers and shoulder their burdens. (2 Samuel 15:2)

III. Disregard for self.

A. Seeking for one's own pleasure is not a spiritual approach. (Philippians 2:20)

B. The bottom line of Christian liberty is that one does not seek to use it for self.

C. We are responsible for the spiritual growth of the weak.

IV. Conformity to Christ. Christ is the example who did not even seek to please himself. (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:25; 14:31; Hebrews 3:2; 5:7; Jon 10:17-18; Psalm 69:9)

V. Submission to Scripture.

A. We seek to find fulfillment in the Word of God instead of other means.

B. The Old Testament is an example for us and is profitable. (1 Corinthians 10)

C. Scripture gives us hope through endurance and encouragement. (Jeremiah 14:8; Psalm 119; 130:5; Ephesians 4; James 5:7-11)

VI. Dependence upon divine power.

VII. A desire to glorify God.

Application Questions:

1. What are some modern examples of conflicts between weak and strong believers?

2. Why do you think that unity is such an important theme in Scripture?

3. Which principle for pleasing others do you find most helpful or encouraging? Explain.
