

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**) The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the second bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER: Where were you on 911? Share memories, and most important lessons? —The scribe

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to fearlessly proclaim the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

What has this study of Romans taught you so far? What are some highlights that you still think about? How has your own weakness helped you have compassion toward others? Did you relate to Mark's testimony? Share with the group.

How to love your neighbor:

1We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written: "The insults of those who insult You have fallen on Me." 4For everything that was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we

might have hope. **How does this relate to what Mark is going through with his injury? Does it relate to what you are going through? What strategies work for your own endurance?**

Mark says, "The failings of this life are not just physical, but when a neighbor fails morally it's not a time to say, 'I told you so,' and create distance from them, but to reach out and extend grace." **How does this work, without stumbling as well? What does Paul say our obligation is to our neighbor? Answer Pastor Mark's questions: Who is your neighbor? How much time to you spend pleasing your neighbor rather than pleasing yourself? How does the parable of the Good Samaritan fit here (Luke 10:25-37)? What is the Samaritan considering when he makes each of his choices? (Why did he stop and look? What was his response? Why did he pour in oil? Why wine? Why did he put him on his own animal and take him to the inn? How much of the injured Jew's bill did he pay? Why? What quality characterizes a true neighbor? (Begins with a "c" ...three syllables...verse 33))**

Do you remember Mark's story of his "hot dog chef" neighbor? "I hope you don't fall, because I can't catch you!" What does that say of his neighbor? Are we so busy and preoccupied that we forget to see the needs of the people around us? What does it take to increase our attention? How important is this message in this day and at this hour? How is this message increasing daily in importance? Look again at the parable, at the Levite and the Priest. What are they missing? How are they NOT living right, when the Samaritan outsider is?

Now look at Paul's prayer in verse 5:

*5*Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you harmony with one another in Christ Jesus, *6*so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Pray this for one another. Take a moment. How is an answer to this prayer the solution we need? What is Paul doing so purposefully?**

How does being a part of a small group help increase awareness? How has it helped you?

*7*Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring glory to God. **How is this more difficult than it seems? How have our differences made it increasingly difficult to accept one another? What is the solution?**

*8*For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs, *9*so that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy. As it is written:

*"Therefore I will praise You among the Gentiles;
I will sing hymns to Your name."*

*10*Again, it says:

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people."

11 And again:

*"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles,
and extol Him, all you peoples."*

12 And once more, Isaiah says:

*"The Root of Jesse will appear,
One who will arise to rule over the Gentiles;
in Him the Gentiles will put their hope."*

How does the history of the Nation of Israel fill us with wonder and thanksgiving and ultimately hope? How much has God forgiven? Why do the Gentiles rejoice? Now look at this next prayer:

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. What does this prayer promise? What will this look like? Paul pauses in his teaching to cement that teaching with prayer. Why is that such a good idea? Do you find yourself interrupting yourself to pray with your neighbor, as Paul has now twice?

Do we need to slow life down to be able to be effective? Do you know your neighbors' names? Do you know your co-workers needs and what to pray for them? What would Paul's prayers do for your own neighbors? (Look at them again.)

Why is it nice to know someone is thinking of us? How do we express our care? What were the two rules Mark spoke of to be a true Christian (Love God. Love your neighbor)? Of the two, which are we looking at most closely? Why? How is loving your neighbor also loving God?

What is your biggest takeaway? Take time to share. What is your next step? Share with the group? Take time to pray for one another. Be blessed.

Don't miss the extra credit below:

When you have time, look at the rest of this chapter:

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

14 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, brimming with knowledge, and able to instruct one another. **Why does Paul take the time here to affirm what God is doing in our hearts? Can you look at those in your group and say these words? What is the effect?**

15 However, I have written you a bold reminder on some points, because of the grace God has given me *16* to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore I exult in Christ Jesus in my service to God. *18* I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obedience by word and deed, *19* by the power of signs and wonders, and by the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. **Notice how the gospel is spread? How does Paul's boldness help? What struck you of his boldness throughout this letter, beginning in chapter one? Why are signs and wonders so important to bring unbelievers to faith? Why have we forgotten to expect them? What does the power of the Spirit of God do to spread the gospel? What can it not do?**

20 In this way I have aspired to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. **Have you ever seen this verse before? If Paul is the only one teaching how much confusion will there be? What can you expect when another comes along, like an Apollos (in Corinth)? Why does Paul want to be first? How important is the foundation?** *21* Rather, as it is written:

*"Those who were not told about Him will see,
and those who have not heard will understand."*

22 That is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. **Who has hindered Paul from coming? How does Paul eventually get to Rome?**

Paul's Travel Plans

(1 Corinthians 16:5-9)

23 But now that there are no further opportunities for me in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to visit you, *24* I hope to see you on my way to Spain. And after I have enjoyed your company for a while, you can equip me for my journey. **Why Spain?** (Scribe's note: The legendary city of Tarshish, where Jonah was headed, whose whereabouts are contested to this day, was said to be in southwestern Spain, "at the

uttermost ends of the earth.” Paul was determined to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.)

25 Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem to serve the saints there. *26* For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. *27* They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual blessings, they are obligated to minister to them with material blessings.

28 So after I have completed this service and have safely delivered this bounty to them, I will set off to Spain by way of you. *29* I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. (Scribe’s note: Paul was on his way to get arrested in Jerusalem. **If you remember the story, explain why Paul was not distressed by the prophecies concerning his arrest. How was that arrest an answer to Paul’s prayer and his determination to carry the gospel? (Acts 21:11)**)

30 Now I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. *31* Pray that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, *32* so that by God’s will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. **How were their prayers answered? How was he received when he got to Rome? Why do you imagine that those in Rome are willing to hear what he had to say? (Acts 28:21-22)**

33 The God of peace be with all of you. Amen. **How will this prayer be answered? What does the answer to this prayer look like? How terrified will we be by our adversaries?**

Follow the Truth wherever He leads you. He has a Name: Jesus. What is your next step? —the scribe