

**Romans 15:1-21**  
**Unity**  
**8-13-17 PM**

The thoughts in Romans 15 follow from chapter 14. There Paul discussed the importance of being accommodating to one another within the local church. We need to be training ourselves to yield to others. We also need to be prepared to give in to others. This requires learning to give in without being offended. Too we need to understand that there is a difference between liberty as we think of it and liberty as it is used in the Bible. As Americans we think of liberty as the right to do something; in the Bible, liberty refers to the right to yield to someone else.

In John 17:17-26 Jesus (in prayer) spoke about the importance of unity. He tells us that this is God's desire, a unity between men and God. Jesus speaks about being one in purpose and in action, understanding and resolve. This is what Romans 15 leads us to, the purpose of being unified. This was the message of preachers particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. They preached to the various denominations that God desired unity, and that we could have unity based on the Scriptures. We can understand them alike (Eph. 3:3), and we can have one mind from them.

**Principles of Unity**

In verses 1-12, we are told that it is important to bear with the weak among the local church. We need to consider Gal. 6:1-2 in this thought. We are to be of one accord and purpose. This is not the idea of compromise (a sin), but unity by being of one mind. We are to accept one another. In particular, Paul points to the distinction of Jew and Gentile being removed in Christ. We are not to permit division, and in this case racial division is the distinction.

Verses 13-21 encourage us to be mindful of the reward for which we labor. We are to have a confidence in our brethren that they too labor for this purpose. We need to have trust in one another. We need to find purpose in Jesus Christ, as Paul describes his purpose in Christ.

We should understand that unity is of great importance to God our Father. In 1 Corinthians 1:10 we are told that there are to be no divisions among us. Jesus died to establish one church, not many denominations. But we need to understand too that there will be divisions when people refuse to accept truth. In 1 Corinthians 11:18-19 we are told that divisions will come, and they come to demonstrate who is approved of God (2 Tim. 2:15). We are not to pursue unity through appeasement or compromise, especially in doctrine (2 John 9-11).

In Genesis 11:1-9 we read about the time that men united to rebel against God. God of necessity divided men into nations at that time. It was on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 that this was reversed. We need to appreciate that division is the result of sin, and can lead to more sin. Jesus is the solution. Submission to His doctrine and to one another results in perfect unity.