

## **ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH**

### **X. Righteousness Applied To Life And Service, Romans 12:1-15:13**

#### **H. Righteousness Applied To Handling Burdensome People**

**(Romans 15:1-6)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. In Romans 15:1, Paul summed his teaching in Romans 14:13-23 on relating to spiritually weaker believers, but in doing so, he provided information in Romans 15:1-6 that applies to handling not only weaker believers, but even burdensome people in general. We thus view the passage for our insight and application:

#### **II. Righteousness Applied To Handling Burdensome People, Romans 15:1-6.**

- A. In Romans 15:1-2 ESV, Paul taught that we who are strong in the Lord in knowing of the liberties we have in Christ have an obligation to bear with the failings of weaker believers whose consciences do now allow for the expression of such liberties, that we should edify them in the Lord and not to please ourselves.
- B. This directive does not mean that we must avoid doing all that we want to do so as to do anything that some other believer wants us to do, for in Galatians 1:10b, Paul claimed that if he pleased men in general, he would no longer be the servant of Christ. Rather, Romans 15:1-2 is to be understood in the context of relating to spiritually weaker believers, that to avoid wounding a weaker brother's conscience, we should not please ourselves, but please the weaker brother. (John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 1975, Vol. II, p. 197-198)
- C. Romans 15:3-6 builds on this concept, and, in doing so, provides insight on relating well not only to weaker believers, but also to even difficult people in a general sense (as follows):
  1. Paul presented the example of Christ Who did not please Himself when dealing with the weak He came to save, for the reproaches of those who reproached God the Father fell on Him, and Jesus on the cross had to pay for the sins of the entire unsaved world that lacked spiritual strength, Romans 15:3; John 3:16!
  2. The apostle then explained *how* to follow Christ's example, and thus bear with weaker people in general as Christ did, even if doing so was hard since such weaker people might be difficult, Romans 15:4-6:
    - a. Having cited part of the Messianic Psalm 69:9 and applied it to Christ's pleasing not Himself while bearing our sins on the cross, Paul asserted "a significant principle concerning the purpose and ministry of the Scriptures" in Romans 15:4; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 495:
      - i. All Scripture, be it the Old Testament (as here) or New Testament (by application, 2 Timothy 3:15-16) "serve to give believers endurance (*hypomones*, 'steadfastness in the face of adversities') and encouragement that they might have hope (pres. tense, 'keep on having hope')," Ibid.
      - ii. In other words, "(a)s Christians learn from the *past* (what is written in the OT about others who did not please themselves) they are motivated to endure and be comforted in the *present*, looking ahead in hope (confidence) to the *future*." (Ibid.)
      - iii. The **reason** the Scriptures are so effective in this matter is due to their divine inspiration: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account," Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV. Since Scripture is divinely inspired, its contents bear God's authority, and thus written Scripture works powerfully in teaching us, motivating us to endure and causing us to look ahead in hope to the future.
    - b. Since Scripture is God inspired, it has His authority, so Paul shifted from discussing Scripture to writing about its Author – God Himself. God causes believers who read Scripture to endure and be encouraged to live in harmony, bearing up with weaker believers and even with difficult people in general, Rom. 15:5-6.

***Lesson:*** *We who are strong in Christ ought to bear with the failings of not only weak believers, but of difficult people in general, by using the God inspired Scriptures that spur us to endure and be comforted by the Lord Himself Who provides us spiritual endurance, encouragement and hope.*

***Application:*** *May we use Scripture for the enabling to bear with weaker believers and difficult people in general.*