

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Romans: Charter Of Salvation Grace
Part VI: The Practical Application Of God's Spiritual Provisions To Living
H. Applying God's Biblical And Spiritual Provisions In Exemplifying Brotherly Unity
(Romans 16:1-16)

I. Introduction

- A. The many New Testament admonitions on brotherly unity can be best understood if seen in an example.
- B. We have such an example -- Paul's greetings to specific fellow believers in Romans 16:1-6 as follows:

II. Applying God's Biblical And Spiritual Provisions In Exemplifying Brotherly Unity, Romans 16:1-16.

- A. Paul had taught in Romans 1-15 how one could function in gracious, unifying brotherly love toward other believers when he was justified, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and dependent on Him for godly behavior.
- B. To our benefit, Romans 16:1-16 provides a glimpse into that way of relating to one another (as follows):
 - 1. Paul put great trust and great honor on the woman, Phebe, in Romans 16:1-2:
 - a. Though some may complain that Paul disliked women due to his 1 Timothy 2:12 call that they not have authority over nor teach men, he put great trust and honor in the woman, Phebe, by sending this key epistle to the important Church at Rome, a Church he had not visited (Rom. 1:13), through her as seen in his commendation of her to the Church, Rom. 16:1; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 499.
 - b. Besides, Paul urged the Church to help Phebe in whatever work she did, for she had helped many believers as a "servant" of the Church at Cenchræa. [I take *diakanon* in Romans 12:1 to be "servant" as in Romans 15:8, not the office of "deacon" as in Philippians 1:1, Ibid., for these reasons: (a) there was no office of "deaconess" since there are no qualifications for them in the Pastoral Epistles like there are for elders and deacons, 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 8-13; Tit. 1:5-9. (b) True, qualifications are given for widows in 1 Timothy 5:9-10, but not to hold office, but to be financially supported by the Church.]
 - 2. Paul also honored Aquilla and Priscilla (Romans 16:3-4; Acts 18:1-3), a couple who had risked their lives for him. He also sent greetings to the Church that met in their home, revealing their hospitality, another realm of their variegated help to the Early Church leaders, cf. Acts 18:24-28.
 - 3. Paul referred to Epaphroditus (Romans 16:5), Ampliatus (Romans 16:8), Stachys (Romans 16:9) and Persis (Romans 16:12) as "beloved" brothers in Christ, people who impacted others by their love!
 - 4. Paul sent greetings to Mary due to her great work in behalf of his ministry team, Romans 16:6.
 - 5. Andronicus and Junia, fellow Jewish believers, who were well known by the Apostles, and who were believers before Paul, are recognized for their lofty reputation, and greeted accordingly, Romans 16:7.
 - 6. Urbanus is a name of a native Roman, not a Jew; however, due to their mutual position in Christ, Paul sent him greetings as his helper, Rom. 16:9a; John Murray, Epistle to the Romans (NIC), 1975, p. 230.
 - 7. Paul greeted Apelles because he had apparently been approved in special trials in his life, Romans 16:10; Ibid. Aristobulus was greeted as believers were in his house, needing recognition, Rom. 16:10.
 - 8. Paul greeted Herodian, a kinsman or relative to Paul, as a spiritual brother in Christ, Romans 16:11a!
 - 9. In Romans 16:11b, Paul greeted the household of Narcissus, the survivors of a "powerful freedman by that name put to death shortly after the accession of Nero and therefore some years before Paul wrote this epistle," Ibid., p. 231. In their loss of their patriarch, this family needed special encouragement!
 - 10. Tryphena and Tryphosa are recognized for their labor in the Lord, but Persis is given special emphasis for being both beloved and thereupon laboring much in Christ, Romans 16:12.
 - 11. Rufus, a special man is recognized, but also his mother who was also like a mother to Paul, 16:13.
 - 12. Finally, Paul recognized other believers in a general way, naming Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes and the believers in their household, and he named Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints in their home, Romans 16:14-15.
 - 13. Finally, Paul urged believers to greet one another with a typical holy kiss, Rom. 16:16 (1 Cor. 16:20).

Lesson: Paul expressed great trust and honor for various believers for their work for God, self-sacrifice, hospitality, love, lofty godly reputation, help and victory in overcoming trials, and that regardless of their gender, ethnic or racial heritage, due to the work of the Holy Spirit in his own heart and life!

Application: May we follow Paul's example and relate in blessing to one another by the power of God!