

## Romans Lesson 20 Articles

**15:13** The normal Christian life is to be characterized by hope, joy, and peace. As we grow in grace, God wants us to experience more and more of each of them—and if they're lacking, something has gone wrong.

**15:30** God loves to answer the faithful prayers of believers that are offered on behalf of other believers. Paul, the great apostle, frequently asked others to pray for him. God wants us praying regularly for each other.<sup>1</sup>

Paul adds a personal word at this juncture and speaks of his own ministry in a way that is very revealing of the character and personality of the apostle himself. **I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another** (verse 14). Is Paul just being political here? I don't think the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, could be. Rather, Paul was confident that the spirit of goodness prevailed among these saints in Rome, and that they were people who were filled with knowledge. They did have a mature ability to teach each other and admonish each other. Paul does not give himself to idle compliments. This is a sincere compliment from the pen of the apostle which tells us something about the community of Christians that was in Rome. This was an extraordinary church. Imagine a minister honestly being able to say to his congregation—I am sure that you are full of goodness, that you are filled with knowledge, and that you are able to teach one another. There are not many congregations that could hear that kind of honest evaluation and compliment.

Paul continues, **I have written to you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again** (verse 15). Paul is saying that it is because he knew they were mature that he had been so bold. Obviously, when a teacher is in the company of mature Christians who are deeply grounded in the faith and knowledgeable about the Word of God, it is much easier to speak candidly without fear of being misunderstood and without fear of offending a weaker brother. But there is a second reason for his boldness: **because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles**. Paul is saying, I have been bold because of my authority as an apostle. The servanthood of the apostle Paul was one that carried weighty, enormous authority, which allowed for a certain boldness.

Now Paul makes a strange comment here: **with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God** (verse 16). We don't normally think of Paul as a priest. We remember that in the Old Testament the function of the priest was to make oblations, to make offerings to God. But there are not any sin-offerings or atonements to be made any more, because the perfect sacrifice has been offered up once and for all by Christ, our great High Priest. But yet Paul calls himself a priest. Well, what is it that the priest offers now? One activity of the priesthood of the New Testament church is the offering of the gospel to the world. Why? **so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit** (verse 16). It was not Paul's act which was to be acceptable and sanctified. *Rather the idea presented is that the Gentiles themselves became an offering to God, made acceptable by the sanctifying work of the Spirit.* Paul's great ministry was to bring men and women, through the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Spirit, to offer themselves as a living sacrifice to God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley, C. F. (2005). *The Charles F. Stanley life principles Bible: New King James Version* (Ro 15:13–30). Nashville, TN: Nelson Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> Sproul, R. C. (1994). *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (pp. 243–244). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.