

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

Romans

A New Life

Lesson #21: Brothers and Sisters in Christ (Part II)

INTRODUCTION

In what ways do you wish your relationships with other Christians were stronger?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Romans 16: 1-27

Note: Phoebe was probably Paul's courier of this letter to the Romans, the only copy. Travel in those days was often hazardous, and the few inns that existed usually were connected with the worst sort of taverns, many of which were also brothels. The only safe places to stay were with a friend or a friend of a friend. Consequently, letters of commendation were routinely given to travelers by friends who had relatives or friends along the way who could provide food, lodging, and sometimes escort through dangerous areas. Such help was especially important for Christians and even more especially for those who were Jewish, who often were subjected to persecution not only by Gentiles but by unbelieving fellow Jews. Women were in even more danger since their status was much different than today's Western society. ¹ The holy kiss (vs. 16) is obviously of Eastern origin, a commonplace function in the Orient, and it continued for a very long time in the early church. Today's equivalent might be a hardy handshake or a "Christian hug." It was usually experienced after a time of prayer and before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.² Paul seldom wrote his own epistles by hand. He almost always used a secretary. He would dictate his letters and one of his helpers (Tertius vs. 22) would write them on his behalf.³ This may have been because of his bad eyesight.

1. It may be significant that the first person Paul writes about is a woman. What position (diakonon) did Phoebe have in the Cenchrea church? (*Note: Cenchrea was a section of Corinth.*)
2. In spite of the fact that Paul had never been to Rome, he sends greetings to more than twenty-five people by name. What difference does it make that Paul knows their names and specifically mentions them? Why did he appreciate them? **1 Cor 4:2** What is the lesson for us? vv.1-16
3. Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers like Paul, probably successful enough to have a large home to host worship services? In what practical ways might we imitate their example?
4. Just as in Paul's days, what type of people would cause divisions and create problems in the family of God? How would you know them? **Matt 7:15; Prov 6:16-19**
5. How can we overcome the subtle but destructive influence of such people?
6. How do the final words of Romans summarize the scope of our salvation from beginning to end? vv.25-27
7. How has Romans helped to understand your salvation more completely?

APPLICATION

The theme of the Protestant Reformation was born from Martin Luther's study of Romans and the idea *sola deo gloria* – to God alone the glory. This study has shown us how we can glorify God through our obedience and devotion to God the Son who has redeemed us from the curse of the law. **Col 1:26**
Thank Him.

¹ MacArthur, J. (1996). *Romans* (Ro 16:1). Chicago: Moody Press.

^{2,3} Sproul, R. C. (1994). *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (252, 253). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

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