

## WITH ONE HEART AND MOUTH GLORIFY GOD

Romans 14:1-15:13  
Key Verse 15:6

Lesson 14

"...so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Christian community in Rome was a diverse one. There were both Jews and Gentiles, and they had gathered in Rome from all over the Roman Empire. They brought with them a diversity of cultural backgrounds. How could they overcome their human differences and glorify God with one heart and mouth? Paul gives some clear directions about how to maintain their unity in Christ and build one another up in faith. Their diversity of backgrounds could then become a big plus in reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### 1. When Christians differ (14:1-12)

The Jewish Christians had grown up keeping the dietary rules of the Old Testament. They also believed that they should keep Saturday as the Sabbath. Paul calls them "those whose faith is weak." They were not like the self-righteous Jews who thought that the Gentiles were second-class Christians if they had not been circumcised. They simply had a hard time giving up the customs of a lifetime. Paul says that Christians should accept one another without passing judgment. We should not argue about food or about days. If a person is a vegetarian because of his religious scruples, then that's fine. Or if he wants to keep Saturday as the Sabbath and celebrate Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we should not argue with him or judge him. Verse 3 says, "the man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him." And verse 5 says, "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind."

The important thing is that each person acknowledge Christ as Lord and Master. We belong to Jesus. Whatever we do, we should do for his glory. We don't have to judge one another because each of us must stand or fall before our Master. We must strive to please him and glorify him in everything we do. Paul says that whatever we do we should do "to the Lord." Whatever we eat, we should thank God for it; whatever day we observe should be a day of worship of God. "If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." (8)

Jesus himself gave us an example. He is everything to everyone. He died and came to life so that he might be Lord of both the living and the dead. He died for Jews and for Gentiles. Everyone for whom Jesus died is my brother or sister.

Someday, each of us must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give

account of his life to God, for God has promised that every knee will bow and every tongue confess to God.

## 2. Act in love (13-23)

Christ sets us free. We are free to live according to our own consciences. We do not have to be slaves to the scruples of others; and we should stop passing judgment on others. But there is a higher law that has something to say about how I use my freedom. It is the law of love. We are called by Christ to love one another. This means that I am responsible for my influence on others. My life and actions should build up and encourage others. I must make up my mind not to put a stumbling block in the path of another; I must not cause distress or discouragement to another believer because of what I do or say. As a Christian, I must make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.

In regard to my personal convictions about customs and food and rules of etiquette, I must live before God (keeping in mind my responsibility to love others). Whatever I do, I must do by faith. If I have some doubt in my heart about some action, it's better not to do it, because "everything that does not come from faith is sin.,

## 3. Accept one another as Christ accepted you (15:1-13)

There may be people in the Christian fellowship with whom we are humanly incomparable. Perhaps there is someone whose way of talking or acting is offensive. Perhaps there are ethnic or racial differences that are natural barriers to close friendships. But Jesus' word to us is very clear: Accept one another as Christ accepted you. When we belong to Jesus, our life purpose changes. We no longer live to please ourselves; we live to please God. How can we please God? \*Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.0 "Jesus first; others next and yourself last" is the Christian's key to a joyful life.

Jesus accepted us Gentiles in order to bring praise to God. The Jews were called to be a holy nation, a kingdom of priests. They should have accepted God's mission and brought the Gentile world to God, but they rejected their Messiah and the rejected their mission. But Christ became a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth to confirm the promise God made to Abraham. He died for the sins of the world to bring the world to God. He became the source of blessing for all the nations of the world. He enabled the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy. He fulfilled all of the promises of scriptures regarding God's purpose for world evangelization. Christ fulfilled Isaiah's promise, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.'" (12; Isa 11:10)

Only through Jesus Christ can people of all nations and races and tongues be

united to praise God with one heart and one voice. John looked forward to this in his hymn of praise to the Lamb that was slain: I ... you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.' Rev 5:9,10