

Leader's Guide

LESSON 26

Dr. Jerry Nelson

In response to the sermon on March 16th.

Romans 15:14-16:27 **Who is Your Offering to God?**

Key Points

The life of the Apostle Paul was an amazing journey of redemption and resolve. He understood the depth of his sin along with the reality of God's amazing love and redemptive grace. He knew his mission and with passion and determination, set out to bring the gospel to the lost and sanctification to the church. The book of Romans came from a deep relationship with the Triune God, brought about by knowledge, revelation, inspiration, pain, sin and life experience. What more could he possibly say? As we turn the final pages of this book, Paul's closing comments include:

- Encouragement
- Warnings
- Commendations
- Personal Remarks

Paul had great confidence in the leaders of the Roman church knowing they would carry on the work he had begun. After personal insights and requests, he closes this letter relationally, expressing his love for those who labored with him. In Romans 1 Paul knew his mission and vision: "Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith."¹ He ends his final statement with the vision and goal expressed in Chapter 1: "so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen."²

6. Paul takes time to commend those who have labored with him. His work was not done in isolation, but rather, in spiritual community. As you think about your spiritual journey, who would you commend and why? Have you commended them lately?
7. Paul knew his calling and was focused on the mission because of what he envisioned. What do you envision as the focal point of your life in Christ? Are you accomplishing the mission God gave you?

³ Romans 16:17

Paul lived his vision and accomplished the mission God gave him for his life. We often marvel at his wisdom, his sufferings and the depth of his knowledge and insight. How did he know God so well? How was he able to accomplish so much for the kingdom? How are we (or are we) able to live with such passion and focus in the midst of a world view and culture that seeks to destroy or marginalize all that we have been taught? Like with Paul, it will take a work of the Spirit and a willingness on our part to obey.

Personal Reflection

- Paul takes time to commend those who have labored with him. His work was not done in isolation, but rather, in spiritual community. If you were to list the people who surround you, who challenge and encourage you, who would they be? Take time to thank God for them, and perhaps write them a note of thanks.
- If your group is meeting again (before you begin James if you are continuing on), you may want to take a significant amount of time to reflect upon the work of the Spirit throughout the past seven months:
 - What do you know now that you didn't know before?
 - What changes in attitudes and actions have transpired?
 - Can you identify any key measures of transformational change within your group?
- You might want to consider responding with prayer centered around praise and specific requests for the on-going work of the Spirit in your lives.

¹ Romans 1:5

² Romans 16:26b-27

Discussion Questions

1. Paul knew that it was only through the power of the Spirit that he was able to write, teach and preach the gospel. His purpose was to bring glory to God, not glory to himself. As believers our true desire is to do the same. What thoughts and inner attitudes get in the way of bringing God glory and actually seeking to bring glory to ourselves?
2. Paul warned us about people who would cause division. He said to “keep away from them.”³ This divisiveness comes, not from serving the Lord, but from self-serving motivations. What are some of the blatant and/or subtle characteristics of such people? When (if ever) is it appropriate to stay away from these people?
3. Paul commends the Roman believers for their obedience. It is faith in action. Who do you know that exemplifies a life of obedience to Christ? What are their characteristics? How did they get that way?
4. Obedience is a recurring theme throughout Romans. What are your greatest obstacles to obeying the truths presented in God’s Word?
5. We began our series with the following statement: “In our understanding and/or teaching of this book we must never let it become merely an intellectual exercise of searching for the proper exegesis of the text and quibbling over minor details. And in our attempt to avoid a mere intellectual exercise we must also never use the text as a mere illustration of our own favorite agendas. It is imperative that we understand what the author was saying to real people in real life situations and then apply that to us.” What are one or two important concepts that, through the power of the Spirit, you will take away from this study and apply to your life?