

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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IN
LOVE

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Living Stream Ministry

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RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE

We need to receive the believers in the principle of love. In [Romans 14:13-15](#) Paul says, “Therefore, let us judge one another no longer, but rather judge this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause of falling before the brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that there is nothing common in itself; but to him who reckons anything to be common, to that man it is common. But if because of food your brother is grieved, you no longer walk according to love. Do not destroy by your food that man for whom Christ died.” If we receive the believers in love, we shall not judge others, not put stumbling blocks before them, not grieve the brothers, not destroy the man for whom Christ died, but rather walk according to love. We must receive in the principle of love all the believers for whom Christ died. Please remember that Romans was written shortly after Paul had written 1 Corinthians, and that he wrote Romans from Corinth. Paul devoted [1 Corinthians 13](#) to the matter of love inserting it between the two

chapters that deal with spiritual gifts. In [chapter thirteen](#) Paul presented the most excellent way of exercising the gifts, and he listed many of the attributes and characteristics of love. I believe that this concept of love was fresh within him when he wrote [chapter fourteen of Romans](#).

FOR THE KINGDOM LIFE

The receiving of the believers is not an insignificant matter. It is related to the judgment seat in the future, and it concerns the kingdom life in the present.

According to the context, [Romans 14:16](#) refers to the eating by the ones who are stronger in faith. It is good to be strong in the faith that there is nothing common and that everything is suitable for eating. But you should not let your good be slandered in your being unwilling to take care of those who are weak in faith. For their sake, you must be careful about eating what you think is good for eating. Paul's intention is that, for the sake of the weaker ones, it is better that you not eat.

The Church—the Kingdom of God

The church is the kingdom of God in this age ([Matt. 16:18-19](#); [1 Cor. 6:10](#); [Gal. 5:21](#); [Eph. 5:5](#)).

There is much argument between various schools of teaching concerning the kingdom of God. One school of thought claims that the kingdom of God is not with us today. According to this school, the kingdom of God was suspended at the time of [Matthew 13](#). This school affirms that when the Lord Jesus came He came with the kingdom of God and presented it to the Jewish people. Since the Jewish people rejected the kingdom of God, the Lord suspended it until the time of His return. Thus, this school teaches that during the period in which we live there is no kingdom of God. However, [Romans 14:17](#) says, “The kingdom of God is...” This is a strong proof that the kingdom of God is here today. Further evidence that the church is the kingdom of God today is found in [Matthew 16:18-19](#), where we see that the words church and kingdom are synonymous and are used interchangeably by the Lord Jesus Himself. In [verse 18](#) the Lord said, “I will build My church,” and in [verse 19](#) He said, “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.” Hence, the building of the church is actually the establishing of the kingdom. Furthermore, Paul in the Epistles considered the kingdom of God as equivalent to the church ([1 Cor. 6:10](#); [Gal. 5:21](#); [Eph. 5:5](#)). How wrong it is to say that the

kingdom has been suspended and that it will return at the coming of the Lord! We should not accept this concept concerning the kingdom. We must return to the pure Word which says that the church life is the kingdom of God.

Exercise and Discipline

The church is a matter of grace and life, whereas the kingdom is a matter of exercise in this age and discipline in the coming age ([Matt. 25:15-30](#); [1 Cor. 3:13-15](#)). The church, like a human head, has a different appearance when seen from different angles. If you look at the back of my head, you do not see any holes; however, if you look at the front, you will see seven of them. Although the back of my head differs from the front, both are aspects of one entity. It is the same with the church. From one angle we see the church as a matter of grace and life; from another angle we see it as the kingdom of God with exercise and discipline. In the church, on the one hand we enjoy grace and experience life, while on the other hand, we undergo a certain amount of exercise.

We should not neglect our need for such exercise. Because of our need for exercise, the church is the present kingdom of God. According to some

of the Brethren teachers, every believer will enter the millennial kingdom as a king. But, look at ourselves. Do we resemble kings? If the Lord Jesus should come and ask you to be a king, I think that you would be frightened because you don't know how to be a king. You have never been exercised and trained to be a king. I have been told that the kings of Britain are trained to be kings from their youth. Birth is insufficient; a king must be trained and exercised. Although you have the potential of being a king, the kingship also depends upon your exercise. Do not be loose and careless. If you are unwilling to be exercised in this age, you will be disciplined in the coming age. Your destiny is to be a king, and sooner or later the Lord will make you one.

God has arranged all the details of your daily life to enable you to be exercised. Every event which transpires in your life is a part of God's sovereign arrangement. Without the help of your environment and circumstances you cannot know yourself. You will imagine yourself to be an angel, considering yourself to be nice and wonderful, but ignorant of how poor, mean, and wild you actually are. You need a spouse, children, brothers and sisters in the church, and various circumstances to give you a multi-dimensional

photograph of yourself that you may be exposed from every direction. When I have been tempted to blame others, the Lord has told me to put the blame on myself. He has told me to thank Him for the dear brothers that expose me and give me a healthy look at myself. Without such brothers I could not be exposed. This is an exercise we undergo in the church life for the sake of the kingdom.

In one sense, the church is God's family, God's home ([Eph. 2:19](#); [1 Tim. 3:15](#)). In this house we enjoy grace and receive the life supply. In another sense, the church is also the kingdom. What is the meaning of the word kingdom? It means ruling. In the church as the kingdom, we do have the leadership and the rule under the headship of Christ. This is a matter of exercise. In order to have the church life we need the exercise of the kingdom. Thus, the church is our home, and the church is also our kingdom. In our home we have the enjoyment of love, the supply of grace, and the riches of life. In the kingdom we have the rule, the government, the exercise, and the discipline. Praise the Lord for both aspects of the church!

The Kingdom Life

[Romans 14:17](#) says, "For the kingdom of God

is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” When you are about to receive the saints, you must realize that the saints are not to be received according to your doctrinal concepts or religious practices regarding eating and drinking. The kingdom of God is neither eating nor drinking. The kingdom of God is righteousness toward yourself, peace toward others, and joy with God in your spirit. Whether you eat turtle or cabbage means nothing. However, righteousness, peace, and joy mean a great deal, for these items are the expression of Christ. When Christ is expressed, He is our righteousness toward ourselves, our peace toward others, and our joy with God. We must be strict with ourselves and make no excuses for ourselves. Toward ourselves we must be right, narrow, and righteous in everything we do. Toward others we must endeavor to pursue peace, continually seeking to be at peace with them. However, some brothers do not even have peace with their wives, and some sisters have no peace with their husbands. We must be careful to maintain peace with everyone related to us. This peace is Christ lived out from our being. Furthermore, we need joy. Every day we should be joyful. If we cannot say, “Hallelujah, praise the

Lord,” every day, it means that we are defeated and are not in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is as a Spirit of joy. We must constantly be joyful with God, praising Him, and saying, “Hallelujah.” Righteousness, peace, and joy are the characteristics of the kingdom of God today. And the kingdom of God is the exercise of the church life. The church life is for the kingdom life, and the kingdom life is an exercise of the Christian life. We need such exercise.

Serving Christ

In [verse 18](#) Paul says, “For he who in this serves Christ as a slave is well-pleasing to God and approved by men.” By this word we can see that what is mentioned in [verse 17](#) is for us to serve Christ. This means that to receive the believers is to serve Christ. We have to do this as in the kingdom of God and in the way of serving Christ as a slave, in the way of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, not in the way of taking care of doctrinal concepts. Surely this way will be well-pleasing to God and approved by men. And this way will never cause any division, but always keep the unity of the Spirit for the practical Body life.

Pursuing the Things of Peace

Furthermore, Paul says in [verse 19](#), “So let us pursue the things of peace, and things which build one another.” The things of peace are the things that keep the unity of the Body. The things that build up one another are the things that minister life to the members of the Body for the mutual building. We must pursue both categories of things. We have to seek after the things that keep the unity of the Body with peace and the things that minister life to others. In order to do this, we have to leave all the doctrinal concepts behind and overcome all the frustrations that originate from mental knowledge. Satan is subtle. Through all the centuries, he has used and is still using doctrinal concepts and mental knowledge to frustrate the ministry of life and to divide the Body of Christ. Therefore, we must overcome his subtlety by pursuing the things of peace for keeping unity, and the things that minister life to others for the building of the Body.

Not Breaking Down God’s Work

[Verses 20-21](#) say, “Do not break down the work of God for the sake of food. All things

indeed are clean, but it is evil for a man to eat so as to be a stumbling block. It is good not to eat meat, nor drink wine, nor to do anything by which your brother stumbles.” In all saved persons there is an amount of God’s work. God has called and saved them. God has done at least this much divine work in them. If we cause any of the believers to stumble by our doctrinal concepts, we break down, destroy, God’s work of grace in him. We should take care of God’s work, not our doctrinal concepts. All of our religious practices must be cast aside for the sake of God’s work of grace in others. We are free to eat anything and we may do anything that is not sinful, but we should not eat anything or do anything by which a brother stumbles. We must take care of the building of the brothers in life, not the keeping of our religious concepts in knowledge.

Doing Everything in Faith

In [verses 22 and 23](#) Paul says, “The faith which you have, have it to yourself before God. Blessed is he who does not judge himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because it is not out of faith, for all which is not out of faith is sin.” If we are the strong ones in faith, we should have faith to ourselves before

God. It is blessed that we do not judge what we approve of doing because we have the faith in doing it. But the weaker ones in faith, who do not have the faith as we do, are condemned if they eat anything about which they have doubts, because they do not eat by faith. All which is not by faith is sin. So, we have to take care of the ones weaker in faith, not causing them to do anything about which they do not have faith.

ACCORDING TO CHRIST

Paul was very wise. If we are not in the spirit as we read this portion of Romans, we will miss much of the depth of what Paul wrote. Paul began the section on receiving the saints with the matter of doctrinal concepts, concepts held mainly by religious Jews, and he concludes it with receiving the saints according to Christ. We must not receive the believers according to doctrinal concepts, but according to Christ.

Bearing Others' Weaknesses

Romans 15:1 says, “Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those who are weak, and not to please ourselves.” In receiving the believers, we must bear the weaknesses of the weak and not please ourselves. The Lord Jesus

always bears the weaknesses of His believers (2 Cor. 12:9) and does not please Himself. In receiving the believers, we have to do the same according to Him, not pleasing ourselves, but bearing others' weaknesses.

Pleasing Others

“Let each of us please his neighbor unto what is good for building. For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached You fell upon Me” (vv. 2-3). We have to please others that they may be built up in the Body. We do not need to please others for any purpose other than the purpose that they be built up in the Body. For the sake of this purpose, we must pay the price that we may please others. Christ did not please Himself; He pleased the Father by bearing the reproaches which should have fallen upon the Father. Likewise, we should not please ourselves; we should please others by bearing their weaknesses that they may be built up in the Body of Christ.

Being Likeminded

“For whatever was written before was written for our instruction, that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we may

have hope. Now the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus” (vv. 4-5). “Whatever was written” refers to what is quoted in [verse 3](#) concerning Christ and is for the instruction that produces endurance and encouragement with hope. The record concerning Christ in the Scriptures surely is full of instruction. If we receive its instruction, we will be supplied with the endurance and encouragement of Christ that we may have hope. In receiving the believers, we need this kind of endurance and encouragement with hope. In receiving the believers, we need to endure the weaknesses of the ones whom we are going to receive. We also need to be encouraged with the hope that they may improve and be empowered in faith by the Lord’s grace. In receiving the weaker believers, we have to realize that our God is the God of endurance and encouragement who can cause us to endure others’ weaknesses and to be encouraged with what He can do in others by His grace. If we are so encouraged by such a God, we shall be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, not according to anything else. Since there is only one Christ Jesus, if we are all according to Christ, we shall be likeminded with one another. However,

if our mind is in accordance with teachings, concepts, gifts, religious practices, or any other such thing, we shall be divided. The only way to be likeminded toward one another is to be according to Christ. To receive the believers according to our teachings, concepts, gifts, or religious practices does not need any endurance or encouragement with hope. But to receive all believers according to Christ does need an amount of endurance and encouragement with hope which the very God of endurance and encouragement will supply us if we care for the keeping of unity and the building up of the Body.

Glorifying God

Verse 6 says, “That you may with one accord and with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Some versions say, “With one mind and with one mouth.” However, in Greek the word is accord, not mind. Nevertheless, the word accord actually means one mind. We all need to be likeminded. When we are likeminded, we shall be in one accord and shall have one mouth, meaning that we shall have the same concept and the same way of speaking. There will be many believers, but only one mouth. Whenever we have the same mind and are of one

accord, we all say the same thing. Therefore, with one mind and one mouth we glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapter 9:5 it says that Christ is the over-all and ever-blessed God. That is according to His divinity. But here it speaks of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is according to His humanity. According to His divinity, He is the over-all and ever-blessed God; according to His humanity, God is His God. If, in receiving the believers, we behave ourselves according to the Lord Jesus, we shall glorify God as He does.

Receiving One Another

Verse 7 says, “Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” This verse, when taken along with 14:3, proves that Christ’s receiving is God’s receiving. What Christ has received, God has received. Christ has received us to the glory of God. Our receiving of the believers must be according to God’s and Christ’s receiving, not according to anything else. Whomever God and Christ have received we have to receive, regardless of how much they differ from us in doctrinal concepts or religious practices. This is for the glory of God.

Jews and Gentiles

We need to read [15:8-11](#). “For I say that Christ has become a servant of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the nations to glorify God for His mercy, as it is written, Therefore I will confess to You among the nations and I will sing praise to Your name. And again he says, Rejoice, nations, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all the nations, and let all the peoples praise Him.” In these verses we see that Christ is all-inclusive. Why has He become a servant of the circumcision, the Jews? He has become a servant of the Jews for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the promises given to their fathers. However, [verse 9](#) says that He is not only a servant for the circumcision, but “for the nations to glorify God for His mercy.” For the circumcision, the Jews, Christ is a servant for the truth of God, but for the nations He is a servant that the nations may glorify God for His mercy. Christ is all-inclusive. He is for the nations, the Gentiles, as well as for the circumcision, the Jews.

To the Jews, it is a matter of God’s truth, for God has made promises to their fathers. Christ became a servant for them to confirm all the

promises God gave to their fathers. For this, God is truthful. To the Gentiles, it is a matter of God's mercy. Christ became a servant for them to glorify God for His mercy. Christ confessed God and praised His name among the Gentiles. He asked the Gentiles to rejoice and praise God for His mercy. To the Jews, God is truthful, but to the Gentiles, God is merciful. For this we, the Gentiles, have to praise Him that He may be glorified in His mercy.

The Root of Jesse for the Nations

[Romans 15:8-12](#) reveals the all-inclusiveness of Christ. [Verse 12](#) says, "And again, Isaiah says, There shall be the root of Jesse, even He Who arises to rule the nations; in Him the nations will hope." Although Christ is the root of Jesse, the source of the fathers of the Jews, He will be the ruler of the Gentiles, and in Him the Gentiles will hope. Here we see the all-inclusiveness of Christ. He is the root of Jesse, meaning that He is the supply for the Jewish people. According to [Romans 11](#), His being the root means that He is the source and supply for the Jews. In the future this root of Jesse will arise to rule over all the Gentile nations. Thus, He supplies the Jews and overshadows the nations. By being the root to

the Jewish people and by being the overshadowing One, the ruler, over the nations, He brings together the Jews and the nations and makes them one. I believe that should be the deepest concept of the Apostle Paul in writing this portion of Romans. Christ embraces both the Jews and the Gentiles. By being the root of the Jews and the overshadowing One of the nations, Christ embraces both peoples and brings them together for one Body, for one new man, the church.

Christ is all-inclusive and all-embracing. Since Christ is such an all-embracing One, bringing together the Jews and the Gentiles, we must receive all different believers according to this Christ. Consider Christ who is the root of one people and is the ruler, the overshadowing One, over another people. He is all-inclusive. In receiving the saints, we must likewise be all-embracing, receiving people from the East, West, South, and North. Whoever they are and whatever they are, we must embrace all believers together in one Body.

If we receive the saints in this way, we shall receive the Lord's blessing with hope, joy, and peace in believing. Therefore, Paul concluded this portion of Romans with the words, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace

in believing, that you may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit” (v. 13). In receiving the believers in the way as instructed in this section of Romans, we experience the God of endurance and encouragement and the God of hope. In the proper church life, we will be filled with all joy and peace with faith. In such a church life, we experience the power of the Holy Spirit, and we abound in hope. The church life means a great deal to us. We all need to get into it and live in it.

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Life-study of Romans

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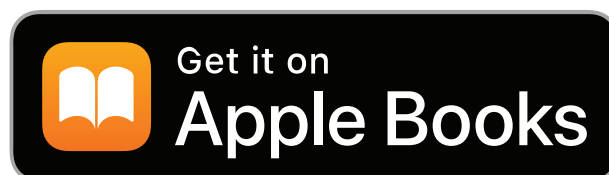
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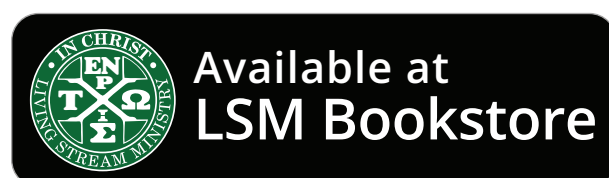
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