

**I. The Lord's New Commandment shapes everything in our transformation.**

- A. He washed their feet and told them to love each other that way. Jn. 13:1-20
- B. He commanded them to love each other as a witness to the world. Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17
- C. He prayed specifically for their supernatural unity. **Jn. 17:20-23**

**II. The Roman church was being transformed, but struggling...**

A. Two inconsequential issues that caused

- 1. Food; Worship Days.
- 2. Not Heresy: tampering with the Gospel. Galatians
  - a) The person and work of Christ.
- 3. Not Flesh: what is clearly forbidden. Gal.5:13-26
  - a) Immorality, unethical treatment, etc.

B. Two groups that couldn't get along: 14:1-2

- 1. The strong: Probably Gentiles. not bothered by Jewish traditions
  - a) But careless of the effect of their liberties on the Jewish brothers.
- 2. The weak: Probably Jews. Deeply committed to their traditions and therefore awkward around gentile lifestyles.

C. Two offenses that hurt the unity: 14:3

- 1. The Strong Disdained the weak: Stumbling, tempting them to leave the faith.
- 2. The weak judged the strong. Judgmentalism:
  - a) *Criticizing the Gentiles for not keeping more rules*
- 3. *Note: the things themselves were inconsequential, but the way the Christians treated each other was not inconsequential—their treatment of each other was a worse threat to the witness than the things they criticized each other about.*

**III. So the Lord applies his instruction. Rom.14:1-15:7.**

A. Because we love the Lord, don't nitpick each other. 14:1-12

- 1. Stop judging and disdaining each other.

B. Because we will answer to the Lord, help each other think like Jesus. 13-23

- 1. No stumbling blocks, do what will help others come to the Lord and walk with the Lord.

**C. Because we follow Christ, glorify God in unity. 15:1-6**

- 1. The price of liberty is the responsibility to help others.

#### **IV. How does the Lord transform us together? Romans 15:1-7.**

##### **A. He expects the grown-ups to be the grown-ups. 1-2**

1. Obligation: We “ought” = ophelomen = to owe, to be indebted, to be obligated.
2. Because Christ is our example. Ps. 69:9 (Jn.6:38)

a) The hatred of humanity against God has been absorbed by Christ. Thus, he did not “please himself.”

##### **B. He opens our minds to the Scriptures. 4. Luke 24:45**

1. Gospel-opened Mind receives from Scripture:

a) Perseverance.

(1) Hupomene, bearing up under pressure

b) Through Comfort/Encouragement.

(1) Paraklasis. Coming along side, help

c) Based on Hope. Elpida. Confident looking forward.

(1) Eternal hope is the focus of the Bible when we see everything through the gospel.

2. Do you want perseverance, comfort and hope?

a) Spend time in God’s Word—but only under the rubric of Gospel.

##### **C. He takes center place in our fellowship. 5-6**

1. Harmony based on Jesus Christ.

a) He Gives unity (same mind) as a gift.

b) *Pray for this – it doesn’t come by program*

2. Unity is a byproduct of being “according to Christ” and glorifying God.

3. The church is a “centered set.”

##### **D. He reminds us of His welcoming grace. 7. He has welcomed you...**

1. Welcome/Acceptance = proslambano = welcome into one’s circle of friends, family, society, etc.

2. *This grace is what brings glory to God.*

#### ***V. How could God welcome unclean Gentiles and rebellious Jews into his clean living-room? That’s the Good News! It’s because of what He has done for us.***

A. By putting us all in the same boat and then saving us all by Grace at the Cross. 3:19; 11:32

B. By living the life of obedience that we did not live—

1. and then giving us credit for his perfect life.

C. By dying the death of punishment that we could not bear—

1. and then applying that death to us so that our sins are removed.

#### **VI. What can we do? Three suggestions: We can...**

##### **A. Pursue any course of action that will help other people trust Christ. 14:13**

1. Simple! This simplifies many moral dilemmas. If we do what we believe will help others either come to Christ or stay with Christ.

2. We don’t have to win all arguments or appear right about every issue.

##### **B. Pray for the sort of harmony that leaves room for differences. with. 5-6**

1. Note: Paul does not create a new rule!

a) This kind of love and mutual care cannot be accomplished by rules and policy! Instead he appeals to the HS instinct for love and unity and tells people to think like Jesus.

2. Paul did not try to make these people agree about food or days—but about Christ and the Kingdom.

3. God grants NOT Uniformity, but unity around Grace that relativizes differences.

##### **C. Trust God’s Grace in our own lives. We who are strong... 15:1**

1. *Spiritual Strength is trusting God’s love and forgiveness in Christ all the time. Like Jesus did, because we are in Christ!*

a) *Spiritual insecurity produces defensiveness, judgmentalism, disdain.*

2. It is the grace-transformed life that glorifies God.

3. Religious people think that they “glorify God” by their added rules and micro-ethical “obedience.”