

Start your study here

Read Read, Record, Reflect, Respond

Prayerfully	Reflectively	Extensively	Creatively	Intensively	Specifically	Effectively
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Repeated
Alike
Different
Accentuated
Related
Think Context!

Romans 16:17-27

- 17 I appeal to you, brothers,
to watch out for those who
cause divisions
and create obstacles
contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught;
avoid them.
- 18 For such persons
do not serve our Lord Christ,
but their own appetites,
and by smooth talk and flattery
they deceive the hearts of the naive.
- 19 For your obedience is known to all,
so that I rejoice over you,
but I want you to be wise as to what is good
and innocent as to what is evil.
- 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
- 21 Timothy,
my fellow worker, greets you;
so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater,
my kinsmen.
- 22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter,
greet you in the Lord.
- 23 Gaius,
who is host to me
and to the whole church, greets you.
Erastus, the city treasurer,
and our brother Quartus, greet you.
- 25 Now to him who is able to strengthen
you according to my gospel
and the preaching of Jesus Christ,
according to the revelation of the mystery
that was kept secret for long ages
but has now been disclosed
and through the prophetic writings
has been made known to all nations,
according to the command of the eternal God,
to bring about the obedience of faith—
- 27 to the only wise God
be glory forevermore
through Jesus Christ! Amen. (ESV)

Review: As Paul wraps up his letter, he greeted a wide ranging group of people present in Rome, affirming their ministry to him, the church and their significance for the expansion of the gospel.

Observations: 1) Identify the specific elements Paul uses to characterize the false teachers 2) Compare the benediction to the introduction 3) how would you summarize the whole book of Romans?

Question: Do you know what you believe and why? Are you as innocent as a dove and as shrewd as a serpent? Can you balance purity and knowledge of evil?

<i>Outline</i>	
Warning against false teachers	16:17-20
Greeting from fellow workers	16:21-23
Benediction: to be strengthened	16:24-27

As he discussed his mission he is reminded that many churches face opposition from false teachers—so he abruptly changes themes to address and issue a warning

Romans 16:17-27

17 I appeal to you, brothers,

Warning

to watch out for those who

Result

- 1 cause divisions
- 2 and create obstacles

12:1, 8; 15:30

A definitive though undefined group: rather than identify them he describes them so the Romans will be able to recognize them when they did appear

Already a problem in Rome

Spiritual problems that have the potential of leading to damnation

contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught;

avoid them.

18 For such persons

Motivation

- 1 do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites,
- 2 and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

Be on Guard	Cause division
	Create obstacles
Shun	Serve their selfish desires—pleasures
	Clever—deceive the innocent, the unwary

The obedient are “innocent” in respect to sin. But the believer is not only commanded to be obedient and innocent but wise—wary of the deceitfulness of evil

19 For your obedience is known to all,

Instruction

so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.

Similar words

20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Prayer-wish The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Greeting 21 Timothy,

my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

Benediction

25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery

Structuring to enhance poetic/liturgical tone gospel, preaching, revelation of the mystery kept secret, now disclosed, has been made known

26 that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations,

Contrast

according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith

1:5; 15:18 obedience of faith

Paul's Mission

27 to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (ESV)

Working Idea (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Paul’s concluding his letter to the Romans with a final warning about false teachers, greetings from colleagues and a wonderful summary benediction.

Main idea:

Watch out for false teachers, be wise yet innocent.
To God be the glory forever and may Jesus be proclaimed
for the purpose of producing
obedience of faith
among all nations

Teaching idea/explanation:

This is the last section and includes three distinct thoughts: warning, greeting and benediction.

The warning seems to be as needed today as when Paul uttered it.

The greeting is from Paul’s companions to the Romans.

The benediction serves as not only a wonderful summary of the whole letter but a reminder that everything is about God’s glory and everything we accomplish is through His strength.

Introduction

Question

Do you know what you believe and why?
Have you tried to boil down your belief system into a core group of truths?



Talk about it

Do you know how much of your belief system is grounded in the Bible and how much you picked up through your cultural upbringing?

Can you explain it?
Can you defend it?

Why would it be important to do so?

Review

The mercies of God motivate us to a consecrated life (living sacrifice) that does not allow the world and its belief system to force us into its mold, but which results in transformation by the renewing of our minds, leading to doing the will of God particularly in humble service within the Body of Christ.

Love one another and the things that are good, hate what is evil. And in the midst of evil, seek to live at peace with all, not retaliating evil for evil, bless and minister to those who are against you. Submit to governing authorities who have been given authority by God. Seek to fulfill the Law by loving neighbors and doing good and living right (righteously).

A practical demonstration of love is seen in our acceptance of other believers, differences and all. Seeking to do all we do, to the Lord and out love and humility we seek the greater good of others to the glory of God.

Not judging their practices and it may require forgoing freedoms for the sake of the weak, so as not to cause them to stumble. Sacrificing our individual rights demonstrates love of others and a submission to God. Seek to maintain peace and build others up.

It is with this kind of love that we are to approach our relationships with other Christians—especially when we disagree on disputable matters—accepting one another for the glory of God.

Having stated the reason for his delay in visiting Rome, along with the purpose for his trip to Jerusalem, as in the introduction to the letter, Paul reaffirms his desire to visit the Romans and to be assisted by them in proclaiming the gospel where it has not been proclaimed.

As Paul wraps up his letter, he greeted a wide ranging group of people present in Rome, affirming their ministry to him, the church and their significance for the expansion of the gospel.

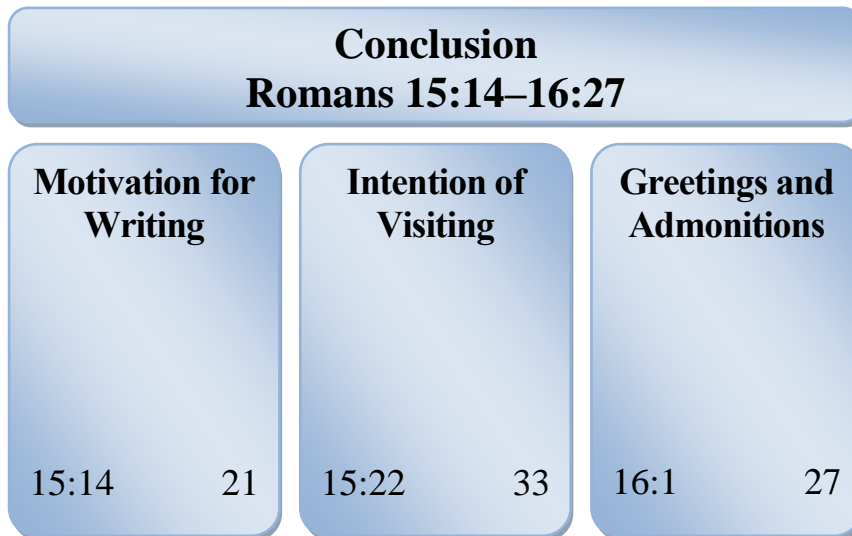
Overview/Summary

WE GROUP THESE verses together for convenience sake. Paul touches quickly on many different topics as he brings the letter to its conclusion, most of which are common in the endings of Paul's letters (see [comments](#) on [15:14 – 33](#)). But two are not: the warning about false teachers in [16:17 – 19](#) and the concluding doxology in [16:25 – 27](#).¹

Preview

What remains makes up the closing. Paul includes in [15:14 – 16:27](#) the elements typical of his letter closings:

- Reference to travel plans ([15:14 – 29](#))
- Request for prayer ([15:30 – 32](#))
- Prayer-wish for peace ([15:33](#))
- Commendation of Paul's ministry associates ([16:1 – 2](#))
- Exhortation to greet one another ([16:3 – 15](#))
- The "holy kiss" ([16:16a](#))
- Concluding warning/exhortation ([16:17 – 19](#))
- Eschatological wish/promise ([16:20a](#))
- Concluding benediction ([16:20b](#))
- Greetings from Paul's associates ([16:16b, 21 – 23](#))
- Doxology ([16:25 – 27](#))²



Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

I appeal to you
 Proclaim the obedience of faith among all nations
 “Now to Him. . . be glory forever”

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 510.

² Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 485.

Outline

- I. Prologue: Paul's Commission to Preach Christ to the Nations 1:1-17³**
- II. Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed 1:18–11:36**
God's Gracious Provision of Righteousness is Acquired by Faith in Jesus Christ
- III. Duties of the Justified—Righteousness of God Reflected 12:1–15:13**
The Justified Believer is to Act According to His Position before God
- A. Duty Toward the Assembly 12:1-21**
 "Therefore" Service 12:1
- B. Duty Toward the State 13:1-14**
- C. Duties toward the Weak and the Strong 14:1-15:13**
- IV. Conclusion: Paul's Mission to Proclaim Christ where He had not been Proclaimed 15:14-16:27**
 Paul concludes his epistle (15:14–16:27) with a brief explanation of his mission, both in general (15:17-21) and specifically with reference to the Romans (15:22-33), followed by final greetings (16:1-27).⁴
- A. Motivation for Writing 15:14-21
Paul's motivation for writing the letter is to justify his boldness because he was appointed a minister of Christ to the Gentiles
- B. Intention of Visiting 15:22-33
Paul's intention of visiting the Romans is finally being realized although he must first go to Jerusalem in order to deliver the offering of the believers of Macedonia and Achaia
- C. Greetings and Admonition 16:1-27
1. Greeting to those in Rome 16:1-16
 2. Final Exhortation 16:17-20
 3. Greeting from Paul's companions 16:21-23
 4. Benediction 16:25-27

Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be Aware



Think about it

12–16 “Therefore”

Moving from the more doctrinal to the more practical—keeping the practical anchored in the doctrinal and making sure the doctrinal is practical.

15:14–16:27

Paul's extended conclusion including his affirmation of the Romans, his personal travel plans in order to continue fulfilling his God given, grace driven mission to the Gentiles, final admonitions and greetings.

16:17-27 These verses are grouped for simplicity not for theme or natural connection.

16:17-19 Warning against false teachers

While Paul has challenged believers to welcome each other in spite of differences, Paul warns them not to welcome but shun those with deceptive teaching.

Interaction/Question

Option 1: Play the role of modern day prophet (little “p”)

What are the theological issues you think will more likely challenge the integrity of the church in the next decade?⁵

Option 2: Have you ever been a part of a church that faced division over a theological issue? What was the issue? How was it handled?

³Adapted from Dr. Harold W. Hoehner's outline (DTS, Spring 1991, Exegesis of Romans 206, unpublished class notes)

⁴Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

⁵You can see the list I developed in 2007 in the appendix at the end of the notes.

Option 3: How would you rate your “knowledge” or comfort with your own:

- Understanding of the Bible?
 - Grasp of basic doctrine (what you believe, why, where it is found in Scripture)?
- Do you sense a need to grow in that area? What are you doing?

16:17-18

Rather than identify the false teachers Paul describes them. The point being other churches he has founded and the church as a whole—in Paul’s day as in ours—faces false teaching. It comes it may have a different slant, a different twist, but the false teachers tend to be very similar.

“I appeal” may not be a strong enough word to translate what Paul says here. He uses a word that is more of an exhortation but softer than a command. “I exhort” or “I urge you” is somewhere between “I command” and “I beseech or beg,” somewhere between using the authority to command and the absence of authority in begging. Paul says I entreat you, with the sense of someone lovingly coming alongside to present a message with a strong appeal—who also has apostolic authority.

Warning

“watch out for” –

Alertness to the danger is the main consideration, because failure to be on guard could result in being deceived.⁶

This warning to be alert is an appropriate warning for the church today. Living in a society that values “tolerance,” that is the acceptance and affirmation of differing perspectives and even differing “truths” requires that we remain alert.

We must know what we believe and why, and be able to defend it.⁷ Unfortunately we live in a church age when we often replace feeling for thoughtfulness or thoughtfulness with rigid dogma.

That is because we live in an age and culture in which religion tends to be polarized by shrill and inflexible fundamentalisms that allow little or no diversity of belief—and by lazy individualism and relativism that acknowledge little or no authority outside the self. The greater the perceived threat of one becomes, the more it opposite asserts itself, and the cycle becomes vicious.⁸

We need to understand those things that are not only true but important, fundamental and critical in order not to make the mistake of “fighting” for something that is insignificant though perhaps personally meaningful.

We must be clear on the core issues, the fundamental truths that makes one an orthodox Christian. As Roger Olsen has stated, “beliefs matter but not all beliefs matter equally.”⁹

The role of “watching out for” false teachers is the responsibility of all believers, but particularly the role of Elders.

Acts 17:10-12 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. (ESV)

⁶ Everett F. Harrison, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Pradis CD-ROM:Romans, Book Version: 4.0.2

⁷ This is my personal motto: *Know what you believe and why, live it and be able to defend it.*

⁸ Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) p. 30.

⁹ Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) p. 33.

Titus 1:9-11 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. 10 For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. 11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. (ESV)

2 Timothy 2:2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (ESV)

2 Timothy 2:15-16 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 16 But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, (ESV)

Result of False Teachers

cause divisions

Titus 3:10-11

and create obstacles

The word “dissensions” (*διχοστασίας*, *dichostasias*) is also used in Gal. 5:20, where it is cataloged as one of the works of the flesh. In other words, those who foment divisions are not genuinely part of the people of God. They introduce factions and strife wherever they go. The word “stumbling blocks” (*σκάνδαλα*, *skandala*) confirms my previous observation that apostasy is the peril in view here. The *σκάνδαλον* word group typically occurs in contexts featuring the danger of abandoning the Christian faith.^{2 10}

As with most false teachers, they “cause divisions” (*dichostasias*, a rare word [1 Macc. 3:29; Gal. 5:20]), putting “obstacles” or stumbling blocks (*skandala*; cf. 9:33; 11:9; 14:13) in the way of believers. They bring spiritual harm to believers by teaching doctrines contrary to the gospel. These people are not, then, serving Christ, “but their own appetites” (lit., their own belly [*koilia*]).¹¹

contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught;

These agitators introduce “teaching” (*διδαχὴν*, *didachēn*) contrary to what the Romans “learned” (*ἐμάθετε*, *emathete*). Commentators often observe that the teaching in view cannot be restricted to Paul’s gospel since he had not yet been in Rome. Strictly speaking such an observation is appropriate.³ But Paul has labored to demonstrate in this letter that his gospel is “the gospel,” for his teaching is simply a reminder of what they already know and treasure (Rom. 15:14–15). Thus a departure from the Pauline teaching is a departure from the very tradition vouchsafed to the Romans when they believed. Paul did not believe that he was introducing novel doctrines to the Roman community. His gospel was in accord with the teaching they received at the inception of their Christian experience. Paul does not reject here all arguments and disagreements over what constitutes truth. Paul himself took a strong stand against Peter in Gal. 2:11–14, and some could accuse Paul of being divisive in this episode. What he rejects are divisions that are not based on or in accord with the gospel that the Romans received initially.¹²

This is an interesting statement in light of what seems to be so prevalent in our society—an enamoredness with “new.”

² Cf. Matt. 5:29, 30; 11:6; 13:21, 41, 57; 18:6, 7, 8, 9; 24:10; Mark 4:17; 6:3; 9:42, 43, 45, 47; Luke 7:23; 17:1, 2; John 6:61; 16:1; Rom. 9:33; 11:9; 14:13; 1 Cor. 1:23; 8:13; Gal. 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:8; 1 John 2:10; Rev. 2:14.

¹⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 801.

¹¹ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 511.

³ Nanos’s suggestion (1996: 216–17) that the teaching refers to the apostolic decree is unpersuasive. It depends on the opponents being Gentiles, which is itself dubious. In any case, contextual clues for such a specific limitation are missing.

¹² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 802.

There are foundational and fundamental core beliefs that are necessary to truly call something Christian.

For example,

1 John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (ESV)

John’s point: Jesus was human. He has also stated that Jesus was God (1 John 1:1-4; John 1:1-4; 10:30). So any “Christianity” that does not affirm the humanity and deity of Jesus is not Christianity. Now there are disagreements as to the nature, the “how” Jesus could be both man and God—and that is different than disbelief.

We should also point out that the presence of core beliefs means that there are beliefs that should not be classified as Christian, again, Roger Olson has stated it well, “something that is compatible with anything and everything is nothing in particular.”¹³

For a fuller description of false teachers, their motivations and results see **2 Timothy 3**

Command: avoid them, keep away from them, shun them

The second admonition is that believers should “stay away from” (ἐκκλίνετε ἀπό, *ekklinete apo*) those who create dissensions and cause stumbling blocks (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9, 11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:10–11). Avoiding dissenters does not violate Jesus’ teaching (Matt. 5:44) about loving one’s enemies or his call to desist from judging others (Matt. 7:1), as Stuhlmacher (1994: 253) alleges. Paul warns the Romans about these adverse influences because he loves Roman believers! They need to avoid negative influences so that they will not be corrupted (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9) and experience eschatological judgment. Moreover, we see elsewhere that Paul’s motivation in censuring others is that they will repent and be saved (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20). As Cranfield (1979: 799) observes, one may keep away from the deleterious influence of a false teacher “without hardening one’s heart against him.” Jesus himself used strong words to denounce opponents while weeping over the obstinacy of Jerusalem (Matt. 23). Stern words of warning are not incompatible with a heart of love and compassion. Nor should Jesus’ words about not judging others (Matt. 7:1–6) be overinterpreted. Believers should not condemn others and think that they are superior, for they should always remember the log in their own eyes. Yet once they take the log out of their eye, they will see clearly enough to help others with their “specks,” and they will have enough discernment not to give what is holy to unbelievers.¹⁴

Motivation of False Teachers

do not serve our Lord Christ,
but their own appetites,
and by smooth talk and flattery
they deceive the hearts of the naive.

They serve their own desires not Christ.

They are clever and deceptive.

Not only are they selfish and looking for their own benefits they are seeking followers.

Again, in a way typical of false teachers, these people mask their lack of truth by employing persuasive speaking methods. People who are “naive” or innocent (*akakon*, v. 18) are susceptible to such an approach, and the Roman Christians themselves may fit in that category. Their very sincerity and desire to obey may make them easy prey for false teachers. So, in an ironic twist, Paul wants them to remain “innocent” (*akeraios*, v. 19) about evil.¹⁵

¹³ Roger E. Olson, *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002) p. 30.

¹⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 802.

¹⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 512.

16:19

Affirmation and Instruction

This verse provides a wonderful challenge—maintaining purity without gullibility. Paul affirms their desire for obedience but wants to make sure their obedience is not blind but thoughtful.

In what appears to be a popular aphorism, Paul counseled the Roman believers to be “well versed in all that is good” (TCNT) but innocent in regard to what is evil. Somewhat the same contrast is seen in Jesus’ admonition to the Twelve, “Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (Matt 10:16).⁶⁷ In a culture that increasingly reveals the active presence of spiritual forces at war against the church (cf. Rev 12:17), it is critical that the followers of Christ live lives of uncompromising holiness. God never intended his children to become intimate with evil in order to communicate the gospel to those in its grasp. To Timothy, Paul advised the opposite; “Flee the evil desires of youth” (2 Tim 2:2).¹⁶

Interaction:



Talk about it

Is it possible to balance being knowledgeable about the “ways” of the world and the beliefs and practices of differing worldviews, yet innocent about what is evil or immoral?

Do you have to watch pornography to understand its appeal and the bondage it creates?

Do you have to experience something to be wary of it?

Do you have to lie, steal and cheat to understand that there are those who are liars, thieves and cheaters?

So how do you balance purity and shrewdness?

Start with developing and maintaining purity!

Then seek to understand wisdom—great place to start—read Proverbs.

Rather than trying to learn about what is false and evil, the focus should be on what is true and holy. The most effective deterrent to falsehood is knowing the truth. While this does not mean we should not also be aware of the content of the false teachers, it does mean our preoccupation should be with truth.

Just as bank tellers and Secret Service agents are taught to spot a counterfeit by studying real money, so believers should learn to distinguish truth from error by truly knowing what they believe.

Does this apply to the issue of purity and innocence to the things that are evil? Yes. While it may be helpful to know the temptations and the tactics of the world and Satan, we are better prepared to resist evil when we understand the propensities of our own flesh and seek to grow in submission to the Holy Spirit through God’s Word. The more passionate we are for the glory of God and for His holiness in our lives, the more prepared we are to deal with evil.

But purity is not the same as naivety. Parent must be informed as to the trends and pressures their children will face in order to help them be pure.

And as Paul elsewhere stated, the process of fleeing impurity requires pursuing righteousness along with others who desire to do the same—mutual accountability is important.

2 Timothy 2:22 So **flee** youthful passions and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along **with** those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (ESV)

TCNT Twentieth Century New Testament

⁶⁷ Cf. also Paul’s counsel to the Corinthians, “In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults” (1 Cor 14:20).

¹⁶Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995), 279.

Similar statement

Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. (ESV)

1 Corinthians 14:20 Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. (ESV)

Principle

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. (ESV)

Contrast or Antinomy

Jeremiah 4:22 “For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not.” (ESV)

As we deal with temptation or truth issues, the following passage are helpful, though we have included them before.

First, notice the progression in thought

1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but ***I will not be enslaved by anything.*** (ESV)

1 Corinthians 10:23 “All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” ***but not all things build up.*** (ESV)

As we seek to be influencers and as we seek to help our children be influences, we must understand that some activities (good or evil) may be enslaving—may take control. But we should only have one Master.

Other activities are not evil but they are not what is best for us.

Second, notice the context into which we are to be influencers:

Matthew 10:16; Romans 16:19b; Titus 1:15; 1 Corinthians 14:20

These passages make it clear that there are things in the world or culture around us that we must understand and need to be able to deal with wisely, yet in purity.

So how do we not only engage but influence our culture? A few key ideas:

Key #1: The Power of Integrity

An authentic life of integrity speaks volumes even to the most antagonistic.

Key #2: The Power of the Word and the Spirit

The ability to influence our world doesn’t come primarily from us, but from God by way of the Spirit through the Word. We must know the Word and live the Word.

Key #3: Building community—the Power of Love

Our culture is one of isolation, so we as believers need to understand that love is a powerful influencer. We should not simply see people as targets of the gospel message, but as people loved by God, created for His glory.

Key #4: Focus on the Essentials—the Power of Priority

Focusing on minutia makes Christianity look weak and useless. We need to understand what the fundamental truths are, and while we can believe many more things, and we should seek to continually grow in our understanding of God and His Word—we shouldn’t expect the world to believe as we do. Let’s not fight the world for all our beliefs, but let’s keep investing our influence in the most strategic ways possible.

People want to know if a relationship with God really works. Will it help them, will it give meaning to life, will it place them into community? We can provide those answers, we can influence those around us, but it requires intentional investment.

16:20

Provides reassurance and encouragement that the ultimate Judge will deal with false teachers.

16:21-23 Greetings from Colleagues

Timothy

Timothy became part of Paul's mission team on his second journey (Acts 16:1–3) and was his closest coworker (cf. Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:1, 19; Phil. 1:1; 2:19–24; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Philem. 1).¹⁷

He is identified as a cowriter with Paul in six of his letters (2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon). Two other letters of Paul were written to him.¹⁸

The next three names are identified as “kinsmen” and while some translations have “relatives” it is best to see them simply as fellow Jews.

Lucius—no one is certain who this is

Lucius is probably not Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1), nor is it likely that he is Luke, for Paul spells Luke's name Λουκᾶς (*Loukas*; Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24). Moreover, the most natural way of interpreting Col. 4:10–14 yields the conclusion that Luke was a Gentile.¹⁹

Jason (16:21). This Jason is likely the same person who gave Paul shelter during the tumult in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5–9).

Sosipater (16:21). Sosipater is a variant of “Sopater,” the name of a man from Berea who accompanied Paul when he left Greece at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4).²⁰

Tertius (Latin for “third”)

Amanuenses were common in the Greco-Roman world, and it is apparent that Paul used them in other letters (1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17; cf. E. Richards 1991). Tertius, who is otherwise unknown to us, identifies himself as the secretary of the letter. Perhaps this self-disclosure indicates that he was known to the Romans (Cranfield 1979: 806).¹ How much freedom was Tertius given in the composition of the letter? It is unlikely that Paul gave him the general ideas and that Tertius worked them into the letter. In such a crucial letter Paul probably dictated the letter word for word and Tertius took down the dictation (so Stuhlmacher 1994: 254–55; see also “Authorship and Date” in the introduction).²¹

Gaius

Most likely the Gaius mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:14 and probably also called Titius Justus in Acts 18:7.

Who was Paul's host and also provided a place for the church in Corinth to meet or often provided lodging for visitors.

Resuming his closing remarks, Paul passes on the greeting of Gaius, with whom he had been staying while he wintered at Corinth (v. 23). Evidently this man had a commodious house that he made available for the meetings of the congregation. He seems to have been one of the early converts in Paul's mission to the city (1Cor 1:14), and the very fact that Paul made an exception in his case by personally baptizing him suggests that his conversion was a notable event due to his prominence. Because of Paul's remark that the whole church enjoyed Gaius's hospitality, it is

¹⁷Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 807.

¹⁸Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 512.

¹⁹Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 807.

²⁰Douglas Moo., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan) p. 94.

¹ Contra Käsemann (1980: 420–21), one need not conclude that Tertius was known to the readers and therefore chapter 16 could not have been sent to Rome. Even if Tertius was from Rome, the Greco-Roman world allowed sufficient mobility to account for his movements.

²¹Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 807.

tempting to suppose that he is the man (Titius Justus) who invited believers into his home after the break with the synagogue ([Acts 18:7](#)). This involves the supposition that Paul is giving only a part of his name and that Luke provides the rest (Romans had three names). At any rate, the mention of Gaius as Paul's host is strong evidence that the apostle was writing from Corinth rather than from Cenchrea or from some point in Macedonia.²²

Erasmus

Another person of stature in the community who also was financially well off was Erastus. It is impossible to know for certain if he is the Erastus mentioned in [Acts 19:22](#) and [2 Tim. 4:20](#). He is identified as the “steward of the city” (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, *ho oikonomos tēs poleōs*). It is difficult to be certain if this denotes a highly significant office or a minor financial official (Gillman, *ABD* 2:571). There is debate over whether he is to be equated with the Erastus named in the inscription who paved a square in Corinth at his own expense so that he could serve as an aedile (for a useful survey of the debate see Gill 1989). Cadbury (1931) registers doubts about the identification.³ Murphy-O’Connor (1983: 37; cf. Clarke 1991: 151) equates the office of οἰκονόμος and aedile, whereas Theissen (1982: 75–83) believes that the lesser office of quaestor is in view here.⁴ We must be content with uncertainty since the evidence is not comprehensive enough to draw definite conclusions.²³

Erastus (16:23). This Erastus may be the same Erastus whom Paul sent from Ephesus to Macedonia on an errand during the third missionary journey ([Acts 19:21–22](#); cf. [2 Tim. 4:20](#)). But the name of Erastus has also been discovered on an inscription from Corinth, identifying him as an *aedile* of the city. The term Paul uses to describe Erastus, *oikonomos* (“director of public works”), may be roughly equivalent.²⁴



ERASTUS INSCRIPTION

What happened to verse 24?

You will notice that most newer translations have verses numbered 23 and 25 but no 24.

Short answer: Most of the oldest manuscripts do not include this verse. It appears to have been added at some point after Paul wrote Romans through scribal inclusion.

²² Everett F. Harrison, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Pradis CD-ROM:Romans, Book Version: 4.0.2

³ Meggitt (1996) believes that the term οἰκονόμος designates a low-ranking public official and argues that the Erastus mentioned here should not be identified as an aedile.

⁴ Furnish (1988: 20) maintains that Erastus was originally a quaestor and later served as an aedile.

²³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 808.

²⁴ Douglas Moo, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan) p. 94.

tc Most MSS (D [F G 629 without “Jesus Christ”] Ψ [630] 1881 **M** a) include here **16:24** “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.” Other MSS (P 33 104 365 *pc*) include the verse after **16:27**. The verse is entirely lacking in **P**^{46, 61} (x A) B C 81 1739 2464 *pc* co. The strength of the external evidence, combined with uncertainty in other MSS over where the verse should be located and the fact that it is a repetition of v. 20b, strongly favors omission of the verse. The present translation follows NA²⁷ in omitting the verse number, a procedure also followed by a number of other modern translations.²⁵

16:25-27 Benediction

This passage ties together the whole letter but it also particularly reflects thoughts from 1:1-5 and 11:33-36.

And as in 11:33-36 there is great theology but we do not want to miss the worship aspect.

Paul ends his majestic letter to the Romans with a doxology in praise of the God who has in the gospel of Jesus Christ revealed the climax of salvation history. . . **Prominent here again is the theme of the revelation of the gospel as the pinnacle of salvation history and as a message of universal applicability. Paul ends as he began.** Paul clearly intends to stimulate the Romans Christians’ praise of God by reminding them of what he has told them of God’s wonderful plan for their salvation in Jesus Christ.²⁶

The final sentence of the letter of Romans is syntactically involved, and its authenticity is debated. It is quite likely (see below) that it is authentic, and it matches the opening (1:1–7) of the letter in a remarkable way. Paul prays that God will receive the glory for the gospel that has now been revealed. This gospel was both hidden and prophesied in the OT but the age of fulfillment has come so that the mystery that was shrouded in the past and prophesied is now publicly declared and being fulfilled. The gospel centers on Jesus the Messiah, for he fulfills the saving promises of the OT, and these promises are being realized in the inclusion of all nations into the people of God. As the Gentiles exercise the obedience that comes from faith, they show that they are the children of Abraham. God’s saving plan, which includes Jews and Gentiles and is effected through Jesus the Messiah, is wisely constructed so that he receives the glory and praise forever.²⁷

The doxology echoes the introduction:

Introduction		Benediction
cf. 1:4, 16	who is able (who has power)	16:25
1:11	strengthen you	16:25
1:1, 9, 16; 2:16	my gospel	16:25
1:17; cf. 3:21	revelation/disclosed	16:25, 26
1:2; cf. 3:21	prophetic writings	16:26
1:5	obedience of faith	16:26
1:5	all nations (or Gentiles)	16:26
1:20	eternal power/eternal God	16:26
3:29 – 30	only God	16:27
11:33 – 36	wise God	16:27

²⁵ *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ro 16:23.

²⁶ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans NICNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) pp. 937-938

²⁷ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 810.

Bookends		
<i>Prologue 1:1-7</i>		<i>Closing Doxology 16:25-27</i>
1:1 “the gospel of God”	Focus	16:25 “according to my gospel”
1:3 “concerning His Son”	Centered on Jesus	16:25 “preaching/proclamation of Jesus Christ”
1:2 “promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scripture”	Fulfillment of Scripture	16:25 “been disclosed and through the prophetic writings”
1:1, 5 “called to be an apostle”	Paul’s role	16:25 “my gospel” (received and proclaimed to the Gentiles)
1:5 “among all the nations/Gentiles”	Target audience	16:26 “been made known to all nations”
1:5 “to bring about the obedience of faith”	Goal	16:26 “to bring about the obedience of faith”
1:5 “for the sake of His name”	Reason (Ultimate result)	16:27 “to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ”

16:25

In Romans 1:11 Paul stated his desire to “strengthen” those in Rome and for them to “mutually encourage each other’s faith.” Here in the doxology, Paul returns to that theme, but acknowledges that while we may be able to support each other, bear with each other (15:1; Galatians 6:1-5), it is only God that can truly strengthen us. And this strengthening is through the gospel.

Notice how, for Paul, the gospel is not just something that is once believed, but is continually being believed. The gospel is not just a truth necessary to enter into a relationship with God or to provide a secure location in the future (eternal life)—the gospel is the power for salvation (1:16) and the empowerment for living (16:25).

Paul’s gospel is further defined as “preaching of (or about) Jesus Christ” and as the “revelation of the mystery” (11:25; see also 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:3-9; Colossians 1:26-27). So as Paul has done throughout the book, he centers the truth of the gospel on Christ, ties it to salvific history in the Old Testament and places himself at a key crossroad. He was chosen by God to proclaim to the Gentiles (1:5).

16:25c-26

Mystery

Notice how Paul almost creates a paradox: the gospel both hidden and prophesied, a mystery and a revelation.

Though the mystery was declared it could not be understood apart from the coming of Jesus Christ and His crosswork.

Paul said that aspects of this message (e.g., Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; Eph. 5:32) and in a sense the total message (cf. Eph. 3:3-9; Col. 1:26-27) are **the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known**. The message of the gospel of Christ was “hidden” in the Old Testament, but is revealed in the New. In **the prophetic writings** (of the OT; cf. Rom. 1:2), given **by the command of the eternal God** (1 Tim. 1:17), Christ was referred to (Luke 24:44-45), but even the prophets themselves were not fully aware of all they wrote (1 Peter 1:10-12). **But now** in the Church Age their writings are understood.²⁸

²⁸John A. Witmer in John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:502.

16:27

Paul stated the doxology with “the one who is able” and now completes the thought. The One who is able is the “only wise God.” A concept Paul already touched on in God’s wise plan of salvation (11:33).

Therefore it is appropriate for all humanity to praise God through Jesus Christ.

The concluding description of God (16:27) reminds us especially that he has instituted a “wise” and wonderful plan for the redemption of his creation (cf. 11:33 – 36). Surely our response should echo Paul, as we give glory to him through Jesus Christ!²⁹

The dominant theme in this doxology is the ascription of glory to God. This is fitting since the central theme of Romans is that God has so arranged history that he will receive honor, praise, and thanksgiving. As Paul surveys and contemplates the gospel he has explicated in this letter, his heart surges in praise to God. Such doxologies appear elsewhere at strategic junctures in the Pauline letters (cf. Gal. 1:5; Eph. 3:20–21; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; cf. Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 Pet. 3:18; Jude 24–25). The parallel with Eph. 3:20–21 and Jude 24–25 is especially striking since both are introduced, as here, with the words τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ (*tō de dynamenō*, now to the one who is able). As Paul meditates on God’s ability to establish believers so that they persevere in the faith to the end, he gives God the glory because he deserves the credit for the perseverance of believers. Such perseverance has its roots in the power of the gospel, which centers on the person of Jesus Christ. Paul praises God because at this juncture of history he has unveiled the mystery of the gospel, which was hidden from previous generations but has now been eschatologically manifested and revealed through Jesus Christ. It is now God’s will or “command” that this gospel be disseminated among all peoples, so that they will experience the obedience that flows from faith.³⁰

What better conclusion to a magnificent letter—To God be the Glory.

solī deo gloria

Teachers

The benediction/doxology is intended to cause people to praise God as a response to understanding God’s wonderful plan of salvation in Jesus Christ.

So in light of the benediction it would be more than appropriate to end with a time of praise.



Talk about it

Interaction

Sentence prayers in praise of God’s wonderful gift of salvation:

The gospel is undeserved—for sinners (1:18-3:30)

The gospel is free—through faith alone (3:21-4:25)

The gospel is transforming—through union with Christ and the power of the Spirit (6:1-8:39)

The gospel has a history and a future—the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles (9:1-11:36)

The gospel is transforming—of individual character and every relational context (12:1-15:13)

The gospel must be proclaimed among the nations—to the glory of God (15:14-16:27)

The gospel is the power of God for salvation

The gospel is the transforming power of God for sanctification

The gospel is the hope inspiring and endurance giving reality of glorification

It is beneficial for individuals—the gospel is personal

It is beneficial for a group/church—the gospel places us into a biblical spiritual family

It is beneficial for the world—the gospel message is intended for all

²⁹ Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 513.

³⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 815.

Summary

Watch out for false teachers, be wise yet innocent.
To God be the glory forever and may Jesus be proclaimed
for the purpose of producing
obedience of faith
among all nations

Main Points:

Know what you believe and why, live it and be able to defend it.

Our goal is not just “knowledge” or information. Our goal is transformation.

Romans has taught us about *the transforming power of the gospel*.

Though knowledge can cause us to get puffed up, knowledge of God and the gospel should result in humble humility and passionate submission leading living a lifestyle of worship.



What do we learn
About God?

To God alone belongs the glory.



Act on it

Based on the Warning

Know what you believe and why

Seek to deepen your understanding and develop clarity in your core belief system.

Live it

Make sure the reality of your belief system impacts your life.

Be able to defend it

Defend with grace and courage.

Based on the Doxology

We need to be regularly reminded of the wonder of the gospel.

A message that is simple yet profound.

A message that through faith gives life.

A message that sustains life.

To God be the Glory!

Appendix: Theological issues likely to challenge the Church

Previously posted on the blog, Fluency. See www.stevekilgore.com/fluency

This is not intended to be exhaustive nor is it intended to be a statement or defense of Calvary Church doctrine. It is simply my observations and concerns. It hopefully will be used to spark thinking and learning.

Over the last several months (more intensely this past month, May 2007) I have been doing some reading and study (not nearly enough of either) and have become more concerned over not only the biblical illiteracy that I see but theological illiteracy.

So, rather than simply being concerned, I decided to try to start cataloging some of the areas I am concerned with to see to develop a response.

1. the average attendee knowledge about God—some are functional Open Theists, others so rigid in their focus on sovereignty that they question even a challenge to pray

We often challenge people to live for the glory of God, but do they really know who He is?

2. the challenge we face on the authenticity and authority of the Bible—in the face of modern yet recycled attacks from the Da Vinci Code, Misquoting Jesus, the Jesus tomb, et. al.

How will we enable individuals and particularly our youth to develop a trust in the Word of God and the ability to withstand the “attacks” they will face?

3. issues related to the atonement and evangelicals moving away from substitutionary atonement

Several recent articles and books (some from a philosophical perspective, others from a more theological perspective) are denying penal substitution. How do we communicate the central accomplishments of the cross?

4. science and the Bible—it seems in some areas of science we are undiscerning (reproductive technologies for examples) and accept what doctors and scientist state, but in other areas (creation issues for examples) we don't even want to engage in discussion

How do we engage wisely in the discussion between science and faith? Should creation issues be elevated to core doctrines (some are using this as a litmus test for orthodoxy, even salvation and spirituality)? How can we help people understand the issues, think biblically and know what is absolute or fundamental and what is not? How do we equip our children with truth not to win arguments but to share the gospel? How do we as a church engage in difficult issues without attacking people?

5. a lack of a reasoned biblical world view, the ability to think biblically, to understand when I am thinking culturally, traditionally and perhaps not biblically—and with that, the willingness to be biblical even when it goes against tradition or even political lines

This is tied to number 4, how do we balance teaching truth and teaching people how to think? How do we equip people, particularly young people, to withstand the attacks of the “new atheists” and developed sound world views that will enable them to deal with constant change?

6. a tie to tradition and individualism that keeps us from valuing relationship (not to say anything about the need for a culture of change or the challenge to keep 20 and 30 something's)

How do we move people from a deep-seated American individualism to a biblical focus on community, the body? Does our programming conflict with what we communicate is a value?

7. our ability to interact, engage and challenge a postmodern world and emerging/emergent church (where traditional apologetics don't apply)

Are we willing to ask the difficult questions? Can we engage a culture in which 72% don't believe in absolute truth and where 94% of college students believe there are no moral absolutes? A world in which our belief in a singular means of salvation labels us intolerant and hateful rather than loving? We must be willing to evaluate our preunderstanding, understand where traditional apologetics and “church as normal” may not be appropriate. Be willing to refine our ability to speak to the emerging culture, but also not so align ourselves with culture that we make the same mistakes the emergent church says the modernist church has.

8. And all that's without saying anything about the ability to dichotomize or compartmentalize our lives to the degree that some have knowledge without change or how character development at the heart level is easily replaced by a focus on external, behavior modification or behavior containment.

How do we challenge those who teach to not simply dispense information, but actively engage people in thinking, processing truths of Scripture in a way that heart issues are addressed and applications are lived out? How do we speak truthfully about social evils without becoming legalistic? How do we challenge people to self-examination—so that we are aware when we become desensitized to sin, comfortable with exposure to something that is not beneficial or that doesn't build us up (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23)?

I realize we can never force people to change, but we can change our methodology so as to hopefully challenge people's thinking and therefore to real change. (This is convicting)

To this list, I would probably also add the redemptive-movement / complementarian hermeneutic (though not extensive yet), the passionate attack by egalitarians on those of us who "still believe" in biblical roles for men and women, and the politicalization (if that is a word) of the church.

I'm sure there are a number of other issues that you would add, and I would value your input and additions to this list. But not only your additions, but suggestions and help in addressing these issues. I have so much to learn and in many of these areas feel woefully inadequate.

We have work to do.

So to keep the conversation going (to borrow a common phrase)

What do you think the top 3 issues are?

Where would you start?

How would you start?

Romans 16:17-27

- 17 I appeal to you, brothers,
to watch out for those who
cause divisions
and create obstacles
contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught;
avoid them.
- 18 For such persons
do not serve our Lord Christ,
but their own appetites,
and by smooth talk and flattery
they deceive the hearts of the naive.
- 19 For your obedience is known to all,
so that I rejoice over you,
but I want you to be wise as to what is good
and innocent as to what is evil.
- 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
- 21 Timothy,
my fellow worker, greets you;
so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater,
my kinsmen.
- 22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter,
greet you in the Lord.
- 23 Gaius,
who is host to me
and to the whole church, greets you.
Erastus, the city treasurer,
and our brother Quartus, greet you.
- 25 Now to him who is able to strengthen
you according to my gospel
and the preaching of Jesus Christ,
according to the revelation of the mystery
that was kept secret for long ages
26 but has now been disclosed
and through the prophetic writings
has been made known to all nations,
according to the command of the eternal God,
to bring about the obedience of faith—
27 to the only wise God
be glory forevermore
through Jesus Christ! Amen. (ESV)

Conclusion
Romans 15:14–16:27

**Motivation for
Writing**

15:14

21

**Intention of
Visiting**

15:22

33

**Greetings and
Admonitions**

16:1

27