

Steps to Becoming a Better Follower of Jesus Christ

Romans 15:1-7

1. Become a Servant of Others (Romans 15:1-2) The weak referred to in Chapter 14 of Romans and mentioned again here in Chapter 15, are those new believers who haven't yet matured to their freedom in Christ. They were somewhat legalistic in their diet and observation of holidays. Paul reminds us not to judge them, but to serve them in helping build them up. This is why discipleship and the church are so vital! We don't give birth to babies and leave them to fend for themselves' do we? This is the same case scenario with new believers. We are to serve others by building them up. Ephesians 4:12-13 shares our service responsibilities: ***"to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,"*** The phrase "obligation to bear" literally means to bear their burden. Galatians 6:1 also reflects this obligation: ***"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."*** Our motivation must be based off of God's transforming power to conform us into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29) and love, which according to 1 Cor. 13 is the greatest gift and also according to Romans 12 is the mark of someone truly born again. Listen to the instructions of Romans 12:9-10, ***"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."*** This sounds a lot like serving others to build them up.

This is a little side note that I've learned! The only one we are to seek love from is God, and He's ready to give it! If we seek love from anyone else, we will be left wanting! Everyone else we are to serve! Spouses are to serve spouses, mature Christians are to serve new Christians, etc. Our love comes from seeking God daily, not from what the theologian Johnny Lee said, "Looking for Love in all the Wrong Places."

2. Become Submissive to the Example of Christ (Romans 15:3) Paul's attitude was one of submission to the example of Christ, to serve, to care, to Shepherd. John 10 is one of my favorite Chapters deciding the Great Shepherd. May our attitude be submissive to conform to the example of Jesus in serving the hurting, and hell-bound. Paul is quoting Psalm 69:9 in which there will be suffering for those who conform to Him. Keep in mind, this is not our home, not our kingdom, but we believers will one day reign with Christ! Matthew 20:28 ***"even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."***

3. Become Subject to Scripture (Romans 15:4) According to 2 Tim. 3:15-17, God's Word is our instruction manual for life! BIBLE- Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. It removes sin, it refines us, it restores us, it revives us, and recharges our relationship with God. If we are going to follow Christ, His Word must be our ultimate guide! Paul knew that the OT scriptures were divinely inspired and would thrust us into subjection to a closer walk with God. God's Word gives us hope today, tomorrow, and until His return! We are people of hope because we are people of the Word. "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed, If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest." – Corrie Ten Boom

4. Become Secure in Working Towards Unity (Romans 15:5-6) Some versions say, *"to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus."* We have big issues to concern ourselves with instead of the color of the carpet in the church. People are lost, hurting, hungry, and helpless. Readiness on the battlefield is always more alert than readiness in garrison. Our unity as the Church, the Bride of Christ, must be to refocus our mission to the Great Commission instead of building our individual kingdoms built on sand castles instead of the Rock of God's Word. That should give us great security! Two gauges in flight give a pilot security. 1. The Directional Indicator, and the 2. Attitude Indicator or an Artificial Horizon Gauge (shows the wings are level) on an Aircraft and reorients the pilot to which way is up or down. In flight, like life, we can get so disoriented, the ground looks like sky, the sky looks like ground etc. Our Artificial Horizon Gauge is found in the security of God's Word and in the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ!

5. Become Serious about Serving for the Glory of God (Romans 15:7) What Christ did for you, you are to do for others! He has loved, we are to love! He has forgiven, we are to forgive! He has restored, we are to restore! Matthew 10:40-42 *"Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41 The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."*