

SRMBC Family Bible Study

Romans: A New Lifestyle

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Lesson 20: Keeping Friends

Romans 16

In Christ, we have a bond that is stronger than flesh and blood. We are now and will always be brothers and sisters in Christ, members of God's family. This passage introduces us to some of our first-century relatives. As you read about them, notice the care they had for each other.

Group Discussion: Describe one of your long – standing friendships. What have you appreciated most about your relationships with other Christians?

- I appreciate the encouragement I get during my times of need
- The times we have when we worship together at church
- The prayers of my friends for me and my family
- Our working together in work of the Church and spread of the Gospel

Read Romans 16:1 – 16.

1. Study the list of twenty – six people in verses 1 – 16. What does the list reveal about the way Paul conducted his relationships?

- Paul was no respecter of persons – he had all kinds of people in relationship with him.
- Paul took time to get to know the people he was working and serving with.
- He valued women in the way that God does – equal to men and deserving of honor and dignity
- He took note of a person's faith and testimony in Christ.
- Although an Apostle he could relate to new believers – seeing the best in everyone.
- He considered unity in Christ and the Gospel the principal thing
- He appreciated whatever people did for him – large or small
- He must have been a generally nice person to have so many friends

2. Notice the phrases Paul uses to describe his friends. What are some ways that he gives a sense of dignity to his friends even in a mere greeting?

Phrases	Description
Commend	This is a high praise from an important person - like the Apostle Paul
Greet	Be kind to a person – treat this person as special
My Co-Workers in Christ Jesus	Seeing them in the same status as himself in the work/family of Christ
My Dear Friend	A personal feeling – approval of the Apostle Paul
My Fellow Jews	A dignity of being in his people - we are family
Who Are In The Lord	Paul affirms the faith of his friends to the Roman Church
Women Who Work Hard In The Lord.	Paul affirms the dignity of women and their work in the Church – very important in a time when women were viewed a 2 nd class
And His Mother, Who Has Been A Mother To Me	Paul recognizes a women that treated him like a son and he loves as his own mom
The Lord's People	Paul sees all of his friends as the Lord's people in the honor of being God's sons and daughters
With A Holy Kiss	Paul's desire for all of the family of God to see each and treat each other with love and dignity

You know, we always called each other goodfellas. Like you said to, uh, somebody, "You're gonna like this guy. He's all right. He's a good fella. He's one of us." You understand? We were goodfellas. To become a member of a crew you've got to be one hundred per cent Italian, so they can trace all your relatives back to the old country. See, it's the highest honor they can give you. It means you belong to a family and crew.

In a greater way, once we are saved, we become 100% Christians "God-fellas" – members of God's family of His "crew" and we ought to recognize and appreciate one another as His family/

3. What indications do you see of diversity among the people Paul felt close to (If necessary, do a little research about the names and backgrounds in this list.)

- **Gender Diversity** - In Paul's circle – we see men and women as people loved and commended by him
- **Racial Diversity** - We also see Jews and Gentiles – people of different races
- **Cultural Diversity** – Romans, Greeks Hebrews - different backgrounds and traditions
- **Age Diversity** - Paul commends the mother of one His friends – whom He sees as a mother as well.
- **Experience Diversity** - Paul commends those who are new to the faith as those who are even as or more experienced in Christ than himself.

- **Life Diversity** - Paul has befriended the single, those who are married (and their families), possibly even widows.
 - **Positional Diversity** – Paul has people in leadership (ex. Phoebe) as well as laypeople as his friends.
4. What do you see in the relationships implied by Paul's greetings that you would like to incorporate in your own friendships?
- I would like to see more inclusivity of different types of people in my relationships
 - Greater intimacy and fellowship with other believers
 - Shared commitment in worship and cause of Christ
 - I want to be a person and have friends in Christ that can be counted on
 - I wish we all (myself included) could be nicer to one another

Intending to raise cattle, a family from New York bought a ranch out West. When their friends visited and inquired about the ranch's name, the would-be rancher replied: "I wanted to name it the Bar-J. My wife favored Suzy-Q, one of our sons wanted the Flying-W, and the other liked the Lazy-Y. So, we're calling it the **BAr-J-Suzy-Q-Flying-W-Lazy-Y**."

"But where are all your cattle?" the friends asked. "None survived the branding."

Read Romans 16:17 – 27

5. What last-minute warnings did Paul write in verses 17 – 19?

17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.

Warnings	Description
Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned	Paul warns then that there will be folks who cause strife – mark them (know who they are)
And avoid them	Have nothing to do with them. Disgruntled people lose power when they don't have an audience

For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly	Watch out for people who only care about themselves and not the mission or glory of Christ
And by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple [innocent]	Watch out for folks that “have game” – using the babes in Christ for their own ends
Your obedience has become known to all	Stay obedient to the Word of God . Don’t comprise just to please people.
Be wise in what is good, and simple [innocence] concerning evil	Don’t try to be “deep” follow the Bible truth of what is right and wrong.

6. In practical terms, what does it mean to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil? (How can we go about achieving that wisdom and innocence)?

The word for “innocent” is akeraious, “unmixed, simple, pure.” In Greek it was used of wine that was not diluted and of metal that was not weakened in any way. Christians should be innocent about evil, not following the ways of the world (Rom. 12:2).

- First, we need to have a sincere desire to be obedient to the Lord and to the work He has called us to do.
- Second, we need to desire the simple, undiluted and pure teaching of the Word of God.
- Third, we need to recognize the simplicity of God’s commands – whatever God’s Word says it’s true – anything else is false.
- Fourth., we need to walk in the realization the God will in His own time and way will deal with the enemies of the Church and Satan himself.

If someone polled your church with the question, “which preacher has the loudest voice in your life,” how would they respond? For many, it’s the Devil!

Congregations taught the nature of spiritual warfare, the Devil’s active attempts to preach to them, and the life-giving truths of the gospel are blessed. They know how to filter who is preaching. They know what Satan sounds like, and they are not passive. When they hear his voice, they aggressively preach the gospel to themselves and to that message they cling diligently. The fruit is love, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit. Who doesn’t want that?

7. Not only does Paul send greetings to his friends in Rome; he also sends greetings from eight of his friends who are him. What additional information do you gain here about Paul’s circle of friends (vv. 21 – 23)?

- Paul does not work alone as with Timothy – Paul recognizes the efforts of others.
- Paul can work his own people (Lucius, Jason and Sosipater) – His fellows Jews (no “Crab Mentality”)

- Paul trusts others (Tertius) to do what was not able to do Himself
- Paul is humble enough to acknowledge and receive help from others (Gaius)
- Paul can work people in government (Erastus) and considers others as (Quartus) brothers

8. Study Paul's closing prayer of praise in verses 25 – 27. What words and phrases here echo previous segments of Paul's letter?

Words/Phrases	Previous Segments of Paul's Letter
Him Who Is Able to Establish You	By Faith in Christ, God is able to ground us in His kingdom and His family. (Rom 8:3 – 5; 9:11; 11:29)
According to My Gospel And The Preaching Of Jesus Christ	The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is what God has ordained to save people from sins (Rom. 1:16; 10:14 – 16)
But Now Made Manifest, And by The Prophetic Scriptures	God has ordained and proclaimed through the OT Scriptures that Jesus was sent to save us from sin. (Rom 3:21 – 22)
Made Known to All Nations	God in His great love and mercy has Salvation in Christ for everyone - Jew and Gentile (Rom 9:22 – 24; 11:17)
According to The Commandment Of The Everlasting God	God has decreed the wages of is Death – but Jesus is the sacrifice for sin (Rom. 3:23 – 26)
For Obedience to The Faith	We are not justified by our works, but by faith in the Person and Work of Christ (Rom. 1:17; 5:1 – 2).
To God, Alone Wise, Be Glory Through Jesus Christ Forever	God alone is the righteous judge and Jesus His Son is Lord of All (Rom. 2:16, 14:9 – 10)

Thank God for all that he has done for you through Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel. Ask him to help you live a new life in Christ in response to his mercy and grace.

Keys for Living



Jesus has constructed the Church in such a way that we are all inter – connected. We need each other in order for the Body of Christ to function correctly.



Even though conflicts and offenses may occur in the fellowship of believers, we should never be a part of making things worse. God will bring correction to those who cause division in His Church.



No matter what our personal differences may be, the Gospel and the Word of God is the unchanging point of unity for all believers/disciples in the Church.

Paul's Christian Friends from Romans 16:1 – 16

Study the list of twenty – six people in verses 1 – 16. What does the list reveal about the way Paul conducted his relationships?

Name	Descriptions
1. Phebe	a "deaconess of the church at Cenchrea," the port of Corinth. She was probably the bearer of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Paul commended her to the Christians at Rome; "for she hath been," says he, "a succorer of many, and of myself also" (Rom 16:1,2).
2. Aquila	(Eagle), a native of Pontus, by occupation a tent-maker, whom Paul met on his first visit to Corinth (Act 18:2). Along with his wife Priscilla accompanied him to Ephesus. When they became Christians we are not informed, but in Ephesus they were (1Cr 16:19) Paul's "helpers in Christ Jesus
3. Priscilla	The wife of Aquila (Act 18:2), who is never mentioned without her. Her name sometimes takes the precedence of his (Rom 16:3; 2Ti 4:19). She took part with Aquila (q.v.) instructing Apollos (Act 18:26).
4. Epaenetus	(Commendable), a Christian at Rome to whom Paul sent his salutation (Rom 16:5). He is spoken of as "the first fruits of Achaia. As being the first convert in that region, he was peculiarly dear to the apostle. He calls him his "well beloved."
5. Mary	A Christian woman at Rome who treated Paul with special kindness
6. Andronicus	(man-conquering), a Jewish Christian , the kinsman and fellow prisoner of Paul (Rom 16:7); "of note among the apostles."
7. Junia	(Rom 16:7), a Christian at Rome to whom Paul sends salutations along with Andronicus. A Relative of Paul.
8. Amplias	a Roman Christian saluted by Paul (Rom 16:8).
9. Stachys	(spike; an ear of corn), a convert at Rome whom Paul salutes (Rom 16:9)
10. Urbane	(Courteous). a Roman Christian saluted by Paul (Rom 16:8).
11. Aristobulus	a Roman mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Rom 16:10), whose "household" is saluted.
12. Apelles	a Christian at Rome whom Paul salutes (Rom 16:10), and styles "approved in Christ."
13. Herodion	a Christian at Rome whom Paul salutes and calls his "kinsman" (Rom 16:11).
14. Narcissus	(daffodil), a Roman whom Paul salutes (Rom 16:11). He is supposed to have been the private secretary of the emperor Claudius. This is, however, quite uncertain
15. Tryphena	A Christian Woman in Rome saluted by Paul (Rom 16:12)
16. Tryphosa	A Christian Woman in Rome saluted by Paul (Rom 16:12)

Name	Descriptions
17. Persis	A female Christian at Rome whom Paul salutes (Rom 16:12). She is spoken of as "beloved," and as having "laboured much in the Lord."
18. Rufus	(Red), the son of Simon the Cyrenian (Mar 15:21), whom the Roman soldiers compelled to carry the cross on which our Lord was crucified.
19. Hermas	(Mercury) a Roman Christian to whom Paul sends greetings (Rom 16:14).
20. Hermes	(Mercury) a Roman Christian to whom Paul sends greetings (Rom 16:14).
21. Patrobas	A Christian at Rome to whom Paul sent salutations (Rom 16:14).
22. Phlegon	(Burning), a Roman Christian to whom Paul sent salutations (Rom 16:14).
23. Asyncritus	("incomparable"): An unknown Christian at Rome to whom Paul sent an affectionate salutation (Ro 16:14).
24. Julia	A Christian woman at Rome to whom Paul sent his salutations (Rom 16:15), supposed to be the wife of Philologus.
25. Nereus	(Lamp) a Christian at Rome, saluted by St. Paul (Romans 16:15). According to tradition he was beheaded at Terracina, probably in the reign of Nerva.
26. Olympas	The name of a Roman Christian to whom Paul sent greetings (Ro 16:15). Olympas is an abbreviated form of Olympiadorus.
27. Philologus	("Fond of Learning," "learned"): The name of a Roman Christian to whom Paul sent greetings (Ro 16:15). His name is coupled with that of Julia, who was probably his wife or sister. Philologus and those united with him in this salutation formed by themselves one of the "house churches" or groups in the Christian community.

What indications do you see of diversity among the people Paul felt close to (If necessary, do a little research about the names and backgrounds in this list.)

Paul's Co-Workers Romans 16:21 – 27

Name	Descriptions
1. Timothy	Name Of the companion of Paul also called Timotheus. Paul left him in Ephesus to pastor the church there.
2. Lucius	of Cyrene, a Christian teacher at Antioch (Act 13:1), and Paul's kinsman (Rom 16:21). His name is Latin, but his birthplace seems to indicate that he was one of the Jews of Cyrene, in North Africa
3. Jason	(He that will cure) the host of Paul and Silas in Thessalonica. The Jews assaulted his house in order to seize Paul, but failing to find him, they dragged Jason before the ruler of the city (Act 17:5-9). He was apparently one of the kinsmen of Paul (Rom 16:21), and accompanied him from Thessalonica to Corinth.
4. Sopater	(The father who saves), probably the same as Sosipater, a kinsman of Paul (Rom 16:21), a Christian of the city of Berea who accompanied Paul into Asia (Act 20:4-6).
5. Tertius	(The third), a Roman Christian whom Paul employed as his <i>amanuensis</i> (a literary or artistic assistant, in particular one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts) in writing his epistle to the Romans (Rom 16:22).
6. Gaius	A Macedonian, Paul's fellow-traveller, and his host at Corinth when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Rom 16:23). He with his household were baptized by Paul (1Cr 1:14). During a heathen outbreak against Paul at Ephesus the mob seized Gaius and Aristarchus because they could not find Paul.
7. Erastus	(Beloved) The "chamberlain" of the city of Corinth (Rom 16:23), and one of Paul's disciples. As treasurer of such a city he was a public officer of great dignity, and his conversion to the gospel was accordingly a proof of the wonderful success of the apostle's labors.
8. Quartus	(Fourth), a Corinthian Christian who sent by Paul his salutations to friends at Rome (Rom 16:23).

Not only does Paul send greetings to his friends in Rome; he also sends greetings from eight of his friends who are with him. What additional information do you gain here about Paul's circle of friends (vv. 21 – 23)?

21 Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. 22 I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. 23 Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother.
