

Doxology

Romans 15:1-13

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Amplify

Reflect

Outline: Recap

Realize

Points to Ponder

Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

REFLECT

Sometimes the choices we want to make in life don't line up with the decisions that are the most loving for the people in our lives. That's why sacrifice is what transforms our "nice thoughts" into real love. If we want to be the best people we can be, we have to choose to love each other, even when it's hard, and we have to realize that love will always be greater than our liberty. Join us this Sunday as we learn together what it means to make all our decisions from a place of love.

[LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

REALIZE

1. Learn from Jesus and the Scriptures.

- **Romans 15:1-4**
- **Leader Notes**
 - In chapter 15, Paul picks up right where he left off in chapter 14, reminding us that part of growing in Christ is accepting others right where they're at, even if we don't agree with them. We live in a culture where the people we consider the most mature are the most combative. But according to Paul, we'll know we're spiritually mature when we no longer live to please yourself, but to bless others. Frustration with others over insignificant matters is a sign of spiritual immaturity.
 - We learn spiritual maturity from the example of Jesus and from the Scriptures. Jesus never put his own sense of self first, but was gracious with others in their weaknesses and immaturity. He received people right where they were at. We learn how to live from his character and by reading God's Word, the Bible. Statistics show believers and unbelievers look exactly the same until a believer is reading the Bible at least four days a week. Reading the scriptures transforms the way we live. There's no judgment if we're not, but if we're making the choice to not read AND we're dissatisfied with how our life looks, we're probably the problem.
- **How are you doing at the discipline of reading the Bible daily? If you are reading regularly, how is God speaking to you through his Word? If you're not, what would it look like for you to make that a regular part of your day?**

2. Doxology: The God of patience and comfort.

- **Romans 15:5-6**
- **Leader Notes**

- As we learn from the example of Jesus and try to live like him in the world, we are helped by his patience and comforted by him. It can be hard to navigate relationships in a Christlike manner, but Jesus is patient with us as we learn.
- Not to mention, as we encounter the suffering that's just a standard part of life for everyone, Jesus continues to comfort us and walk with us. The comfort he gives us becomes our ministry to others as we share our experiences with them.
- **Describe a time you experienced something painful in your own life, and God comforted you. How is God inviting you to use your experience to comfort others?**

3. Receive everyone as family.

- **Romans 15:7-12**
- **Leader Notes**
 - In these next verses, Paul gives us multiple examples of how Jesus received non-Jewish believers, Gentiles, into his eternal family. There are no prerequisites we have to fulfill for Jesus to receive us. He just receives us as family no matter what our story or background is.
 - What Paul is getting at here is, if God can receive anyone into his family, we can too. He never gets frustrated with us not being at his level, so we can also accept people where they're at.
- **How are you doing at the task of receiving people in your church as family? How can you intentionally grow in your ability to accept people where they're at and serve them as Christ served us?**

4. Doxology: The God of hope.

- **Romans 15:13**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Hope is Having Only Positive Expectations.
 - Paul isn't saying to have hope in hope, but to have hope in the *God* of hope. If we're in Christ and read the Scriptures, we should have only positive expectations because we trust God's good plan for our lives. Apart from Jesus, however, hope is a fool's errands. Positivity doesn't ever ultimately save us, only Jesus does that.
 - Sometimes in the struggles of life, we fix our eyes on the struggle and lose sight of the God of all hope. God wants us right now to have joy and peace in him, no matter what's going on in the circumstances of our lives. But we don't have to go out and "get" hope. Hope abounds in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. We have to lean into the hope that is in us, Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- **When we remember who Jesus is and that he has good plans for us, we can have only positive expectations of our future. What is one situation you're currently facing where you need to transform your thinking to have positive expectations in the midst of your journey?**

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?