

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #17: How the Church cares for itself.

February 2, 2020

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: What happens when the Church cares for itself?

Read Romans 12:9-13.

1. Evangelical Christians spend a lot of time talking about how to reach our world with the love of Christ. But Paul points out here that Christian witness begins with caring for one another.
 - How do you care for yourself? What do you do to stay healthy physically; mentally; relationally; emotionally?
 - How do the above assist you in staying *spiritually healthy*, along with specific spiritual activities you engage in like prayer, Bible reading, serving others & meeting together?
2. Verses 9-13 include 13 activities that God (through Paul) instructs Christians to intentionally engage in together. Which of these do you find easy and even natural? Which challenge you?
 - Where do others make up for your weaknesses?
 - How does everyone loving genuinely together encourage and strengthen the church?
3. Pastor Jay and Pastor Ken have both taught from Romans 12 that we are not created to live the Christian life alone. God has wired us with limitations that force us to rely on each other, and this biblical truth stands in direct opposition to our secular-human, individualized culture.
 - Read Colossians 2:8. How is individualism destroying both our culture & our churches?
 - Where do you battle individualism & secular humanism in your life & your family?
4. When New Life fully practices interdependence, three things happen:
 - Cost. There is a cost to all of us. We no longer do what we want, meet when we have time, help when we feel like it, and choose to learn & grow when it's convenient.
 - Strength. As a local Body of Christ, we become healthy & strong, with no part over-exerting itself to compensate for the parts that refuse to function.
 - Witness. The people of the Cowichan Valley see all of Jesus, not just parts of Him.

As you journey this spring in Groups you signed up for last Sunday, let your commitment to each other create in us a beautiful Church who joyfully shows all of Jesus to this valley.

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.