

The Characteristics of the Strong

Romans 15:1-13

Introduction

I The Strong Are Characterized by Love

- A. They **bear** with the failings of the weak - Gal 6:1
- B. They do not live to **please** themselves
 - 1. They seek to please their **neighbor** - Gal 1:10; Phil 2:2-4
 - 2. They seek to do their neighbor good - 1 Cor 10:24
 - 3. They seek to **build up** their neighbor - Rom 14:19
- C. They **follow** the modeling of Christ - Rom 8:29
 - 1. Jesus did not come to please Himself - Phil 2:5-8
 - 2. Jesus endured insults for our benefit - 2 Cor 8:9
- D. They are instructed by the **Word** of God - 2 Tim 3:16-17
 - 1. The Word **teaches** us - 1 Cor 10:6,11
 - 2. The Word gives us endurance - Col 3:12-14
 - 3. The Word gives us **encouragement** - Ps 19:7-8
 - 4. The Word gives us hope - Rom 5:2; Titus 1:2; Col 1:5-6; 1 Pet 1:13

II The Strong Are Characterized by Unity

- A. Paul's prayer for unity
 - 1. Unity requires **endurance** - Eph 4:3
 - 2. Unity requires encouragement - 1 Cor 1:10
 - 3. Unity requires the pursuit of **Christ** - Phil 2:1-6
- B. Paul's goal for unity
 - 1. That with one **heart** we may glorify God - Ps 34:3
 - 2. That with one **voice** we may glorify God - Acts 2:44-47

III The Strong Are Characterized by Acceptance

- A. They **accept** one another - Rom 14:1
 - 1. Just as Christ accepted them - Eph 4:32-5:2
- B. Their accepting attitude resulted in **praise** to God
 - 1. The Jews and Gentiles will praise God - Ps 18:49a
 - 2. The Jews and Gentiles will sing to God - Ps 18:49b
 - 3. The Jews and Gentiles will rejoice in God - Deut 32:43
 - 4. The Jews and Gentiles will submit to God - Ps 117:1
 - 5. The Jews and Gentiles will hope in God - Is 11:10

IV The Strong Are Characterized by Hope

- A. Paul's prayer for hope
 - 1. Hope produces **joy** - 1 Pet 1:8-9
 - 2. Hope produces peace - Rom 5:1-2
 - 3. Hope is the product of **trust** - Jn 14:1-3
- B. Paul's goal for hope
 - 1. That we may **overflow** with hope
 - a. By the **power** of the Holy Spirit - Rom 5:5

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following questions:

1. How would you characterize yourself -- as "strong" or "weak"?
What is the one "disputable matter" that matters most to you?
Are you handling it biblically? Why or why not?
2. In His prayer to the Father in John 17, Jesus prayed four times for our unity as believers. Why do you think unity was such an important issue to Him during His final hours before the cross?
Does your life/conduct reflect Christ's commitment to unity?
3. Of the four primary characteristics of the strong listed in Romans 15:1-4, which are you strongest in? Weakest in?
4. Left to ourselves, we live to please ourselves. As believers, however, we are to live to please God and others. What does Paul say that you should do for your neighbors? What tangible things will you do this week to act on these truths?
5. How does Christ's life illustrate Paul's call to unity [verses 3, 7-11]? How was it demonstrated with the Jew/Gentile conflict?
How can we apply this truth to the life of the church today?
6. Take a few moments to pray through John 17:20-26. If you have brought disunity in some area, repent of it. Then ask God to give you the power of the Holy Spirit to be the answer to Jesus' prayer by living a life of love – maintaining the unity of the body of Christ for His glory and for the sake of the gospel.

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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