

# Romans 15:1-13

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles, Romeo, to the book of Romans, Romans 15, Romans 15, verses 1 through 13. Romans 15, just making our way through this great book. We've only got a few more weeks, really, in the book of Romans, and we are really drawing it to a close.

And Paul draws this book to a close to the final two chapters. That would be chapter 15 and 16. Really, starting in verse 14 to 15, he begins to really draw things to a close.

So this morning, we are in Romans 15, verses 1 through 13, which ties directly to that which we saw a couple of weeks ago, found in Romans 14. But if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask you to join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God, found in Romans 15, verses 1 through 13.

We'll read the Word, and then we'll go to the Lord in prayer. Now, we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good to his edification.

For even Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

[ 1 : 14 ] Now, may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy as it is written. Therefore, I will give praise to you among the Gentiles, and I will sing to your name. Again, he says, rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people. And again, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him.

Again, Isaiah says, there shall come the root of Jesse, and he who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles hope. Verse 13, now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we are so thankful for every opportunity we have to gather together. Lord, to proclaim your name through song, to worship and set our hearts and minds upon you.

[ 2 : 29 ] We pray, Lord, that we would continue to worship you through the reading and the hearing of your word. We pray that your word would have its effect in our lives. Lord, that it would search us out, that it would show us things which need to be changed.

Lord, that it would conform us more to your image for your glory. We pray that there would be no hindrance, no cause for stumbling. Lord, in all things, that you would be glorified and honored, and we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. We have been making our way through this great book, the book of Romans. And we have been seeing through the book of Romans the foundational doctrines of the faith.

We have seen, for instance, that you are saved by faith and faith alone, justification by faith. We have seen that there is nothing that can take you out of the hand of the God who has you. We have seen the eternal security of the redeemed.

We have seen how God demonstrates that security through his own people, the nation of Israel, in Romans 9, 10, and 11. And then in Romans 12, Paul begins to apply this great truth of salvation, that if you are really saved, and if you are really eternally secure, then your life will look totally different.

[ 3 : 36 ] And Paul begins to apply this great doctrine, because a doctrine without application really is just knowledge that leads to nothing. God does not give us great truth for truth's sake.

He gives us truth for transformation's sake, to change us, to conform us more to his image. And we really began to see in Romans 14, the end of 13, the beginning of 14, and now into 15, the impact that this faith, this salvation has upon our relationship with one another.

Paul has moved from the application of faith in the world to the application of faith in the church. He has moved from being a testimony in the world, living your life out the way you respect the governing authorities, the way you live as a redeemed citizen, to really how you live out your faith among one another.

Because oftentimes, one of the harshest and most hostile environments for the believer in today's time, especially in America, is found, unfortunately, within the walls of the church.

It is found within the walls of our own faith community that we begin to tear one another down. And as you remember, Paul says in Romans 14, we are not to tear down with our liberty that which Christ is building up through salvation.

[ 4 : 56 ] Paul begins to speak of the weak brother and the strong brother, those who are strong in the faith, that know they are free in Christ, and they are free to eat anything that is put before them. They are free to live in the liberties of Christ.

Now, this is not the things that are black and white throughout Scripture. They are not free to do whatever they please, but they are free to live their life of faith in Christ, that they can do all things in faith through Christ.

And then he references the weak brother who may not have that freedom yet, that they can still only eat certain foods, and they can only drink certain drinks. And when it comes to those gray areas of Scripture, those things which are neither black nor white, that really the Bible is just silent on, they put restrictions upon themselves that maybe God doesn't even put upon them.

And it is because of this matter of conviction that they cannot do it by faith. And Paul says that if you cannot do anything by faith, then you're doing it in sin. And Paul begins to speak of this conflict within the body, this struggle that happens inside the church, that some of us are further along in our walk of faith than others.

And some of us have a newfound freedom and liberty in Christ that maybe others do not possess. And Paul begins to speak of the danger of that, that your liberty can become a cause for stumbling in the life of a brother or sister in Christ.

[ 6 : 14 ] And that if your freedoms and if your liberties cause your brother or sister to stumble, then all of a sudden it is not them who are living in sin, but you are living in sin. And Paul really wraps up this whole segment of living in the community of faith together in Romans 15 verses 1 through 13.

I want you to see this morning the focus of our faith. The focus of faith. That if we are genuinely redeemed by faith and faith alone, that if we accept Jesus Christ on the works that he has accomplished, on the works which we have accomplished, and if that acceptance of Jesus Christ for his finished work leads us to a new life, a life of faith, that we are completely forgiven, we are completely redeemed, we are completely set free, that we are no longer bound by the rules and regulations of religion.

By the way, Christ came to set us free from religion and came to usher us into a relationship. That because of that relationship with Jesus Christ, now all of a sudden we have this newfound freedom. We used to bind ourselves by do's and don'ts, and now all of a sudden we tie ourselves to a person, that is Jesus Christ. Then all of a sudden that life of faith has a new focus.

Because religion ultimately focuses on self. Any religion you find around the world, which by the way, anywhere you go in the world you will find religion.

[ 7 : 43 ] Because the Bible tells us man was created to worship. And all over the world it testifies to this reality, all men worship something. And every other world religion, every other major religion, and every other minor religion has this one central thing, it focuses on self.

Namely, what you must do to make sure you will be okay. That self-focus. How you need to take care of you, and you need to make sure you do the right things, and don't do the wrong things, and make the right decisions, and don't make the bad decisions.

And Christianity is something totally different. It takes the focus, or at least it should take the focus off of yourself, and cause you to focus on Jesus Christ.

What He has done, what He is calling, what He is leading, how He is promoting, how He is securing, how He is saving, how He is redeeming. It is the focus on the person of Christ. And because the focus of faith is completely transformed, even before you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you were worried about you. I mean, you were. I was.

[ 8 : 54 ] Am I okay? Am I doing enough? How will I ever know? The problem is, is that I always had a major problem, and the problem was me. And when we take that focus off of ourselves, and we put that focus on Jesus Christ, and all of a sudden, faith begins to look other ways.

It begins to place its attention on something else. And here, Paul lays that out. I want you to see four things which faith focuses on in its everyday life. Number one, we see that faith focuses not on one's self, or one's freedoms, or one's liberty.

It's not, now that I'm free in Christ, I can do this. By the way, there are some believers who live in that, and we use that as an excuse, but that is a mis-focus of faith.

We see here that the true focus and the proper focus of faith should first and foremost be on the opportunity to do good. It is the focus on the opportunity before it. Look at this.

It says, now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength. All of a sudden, Paul begins to put the responsibility upon the strong believers rather than the mature believers telling the weak believers, well, you need to grow up.

[ 10 : 04 ] You need to get in your scripture. You need to find out that you're free to do that. Quit putting all these rules and regulations on yourself. It is really the responsibility of the strong believers, Paul says.

He says, you should bear the weakness. Now, that doesn't mean that you should carry the burden of the weak brother or sister, but it means that if you are further along in your faith, you may have the freedom to do something that your brother or sister in faith does not have the freedom to do, and you, as the strong one, will refrain from doing it until they find that freedom to do it.

It is being patient with the brothers and sisters in faith. It is being patient with fellow believers. He says, now we, Paul puts himself in the same boat, who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength.

Here it is. We begin to see this focus and not just please ourselves. So many believers, when they come to Jesus Christ, they are overrun with this newfound freedom. And all of a sudden, they begin to look at what they can do and how they can live and how now they can do this.

Paul says, we're not just in this to please ourselves. It says in verse 2, each of us, now all of a sudden, the responsibility goes from just the strong to the entire body. By the way, this is not a responsibility given to just a select few in the church.

[ 11 : 25 ] Paul is writing to the church in general. Look at what it says. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good to his edification.

Here is the opportunity before the believer. The believer in faith, the one who has accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior, now has the opportunity like no other time to forget about himself because he is a dead man.

Paul says, I have been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live no longer by me but by the power of Christ who lives inside of me. Galatians 2.20, I have been crucified by Christ.

I have been crucified in faith. I am no longer alive. In Christ, we are dead men and women. It is no longer us. We are born again. So we don't, a dead man doesn't think about himself.

A dead lady doesn't think about herself. We don't have to think about ourselves anymore. The Bible says that now we have this opportunity having found our life in Christ to quit focusing on ourselves anymore.

[ 12 : 25 ] Now, it says we ought to please our neighbor. We have the opportunity like no other in all of history to please our neighbor for his good to his edification.

The focus of faith and I'll just be honest with you, this is something your pastor, it convicts me and you know, it works on me all the time. What an opportunity it is to look at those around you and say, God has given me the chance to live for their good and their edification because he has me.

Isn't that good? It's convicting and encouraging at the same moment. If I am secure in Christ and I am, if he has me and I don't have to worry about my eternal security, sure I need to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling, but that means I need to live it out.

Well, one of the ways I live it out is by stopping focusing on myself and begin focusing on the opportunity I have been giving for the good of others.

I now have an opportunity like no other time in history. I now have the chance to build others up in their faith and friends, so do you. What an opportunity we have been given since Christ has completely redeemed you, since Christ has completely set you free from sin, since Christ has completely secured you.

[13:52] Now you are free not to focus on you any longer, you are free to focus on your neighbor beside you. You say, well, who is my neighbor? We're talking about the body of Christ here.

Your brothers and sisters in faith, those around you in the church and outside the church, those of like faith, you have the opportunity to build them up, to edify them.

Rather than tearing them down, you now have the opportunity to build them up. Think about that. That's called discipleship. Discipleship is living life with one another. I was reminded this week, Jesus gave that great promise and the great commission, right?

And lo, I am with you always even until the end of the age. Before he promised to be with you always, he said, all authority has been given unto me. Right? Jesus is the man of authority.

The way he said that, the wording he used, he said, all authority has rightfully been given to me because it is mine. Now that sounds cumbersome in English, but that's exactly what it means. It means that I have been given authority because it belongs to me and I have it rightfully, which means I am the rightful author.

[14:56] I'm the one with authority and it has finally come back to me. He says, I am the man of authority, I possess all of authority and I am with you. But there's this one stipulation in there. The presence of Christ is tied to the activity Christ has commanded us to do.

Right? The presence of Christ is tied to the command to go and make disciples. Which means, the man of authority, that is Jesus Christ, who promises to be with us forever, says he will be with us as we go and make disciples.

Well, how do we make disciples? by taking the opportunity to live life alongside of others for their good to their edification. Jesus didn't command us to make believers.

Though you do not become a disciple without believing, he commanded us to make disciples. And let's just be honest here, let's say it, discipleship is messy.

You can lead someone to faith in Jesus Christ in a moment. It will take you a lifetime to disciple them. In an instant, someone can come to faith in Jesus Christ.

[16:06] You don't have to be there, but you can be there. But it takes time. It takes effort. It takes consistency to disciple them.

Discipleship is living life alongside of them. Edifying them. Building up what Christ is building up. Have you ever thought about that? Paul tells us in Romans 14, don't tear down what Christ is building up.

And now we are encouraged to edify, which literally means to build up others. We get the chance. We have the opportunity to join Christ in his work of building others up.

So here's the pointed question. Who are you building up? Who? You need to start in your own family.

Sure, you need to work with your children. Don't be discouraged. Sometimes that greatest ministry is right in your home with you. You need to step out of that. Who are you building up?

[17:07] What an opportunity. Anybody in the world can tear others down. But what an opportunity to build them up. I'm telling you, it's a message I'm preaching to myself.

That's the first one. We see the opportunity for good. Number two, we see the impact of unity. We see here the impact of unity. What a focus.

I want to ask you something. What would the church look like if the church was completely united? I mean, what would the church look like if the church was what Jesus prayed for in John 17?

I pray, Father, that they may be one as you and I are one. I mean, what would the church look like if the church was of one accord and one heart in one direction with one purpose?

Paul says, I am intent on one purpose. I focus on one thing. This is why Paul said, let there be no divisive spirit among you. This is why the Bible says the root of bitterness shouldn't run through the church.

[18:13] What would the church look like if the church was one? Well, we don't have to go very far. You can go to the book of Acts and see what the church looked like when the church was one.

When the church was one and they prayed together, the walls were shaken.

When the church was one and they preached, people came to faith daily. When the church was one and they asked, God answered. When the church was one and Peter was in prison and somebody else was asking, church was one praying for Peter, Peter wasn't even praying.

God sent an angel to release Peter while he was just waiting to die. Why? Because one church was praying one prayer of one accord. Things happen when the church is united. There is an impact on the unity of the church.

Friend, have you ever tried to figure out why Satan works so hard to cause division in the body? It's because when the people of God get together doing the things of God, the world cannot stop a movement of God.

Jesus himself said, the gates of hell will not be able to resist the work of the church. So all hell has ever done is to try to disrupt the work of the church because it knows it cannot stop the work of the church and the way it does it is through disunity.

[ 19 : 26 ] Look at this. We'll come back to verse 4 in just a minute. Verse 5 says, Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.

We see two things regarding the unity of the church here. Number one, this is a God-sized event. The church will never be united unless God leads it to unity. You know why? Because you and I have too much in disagreement to ever live in total agreement.

I mean, we're just different people. We are. Your past and my past are totally different. My perspective and your perspective are totally different. We don't see things the same.

We don't think things the same. So for God to bring us together as one, it has to be God who brings us together as one. That's why it's such a spiritual matter. That's why it's not something that we can connive, not something that we can do, not something that we can manipulate.

If you find yourself in a room full of everybody just like you, leave. because it's a scary place to be. We call that cults.

[ 20 : 36 ] Sorcery, witchcraft. We call that brainwashing. Trying to make you all think the same, make you all act the same, make you all live the same.

That's not Christianity. One of the beauties of Christianity is that God takes people of such diversity and puts them together and makes them live in unity. He doesn't ask you to change your background.

He doesn't ask you to change what you were in the past. He wants to redeem what you were in the past. He doesn't ask you to be something totally different. He wants to make you a different creature because of your past.

He doesn't ask you to be conformed to one little thing, to all dress the same, look the same, and act the same. He wants to make us the same. This is why the second aspect of unity, not only is it a supernatural work of God, secondly, it's not found in any person.

That's what a cult does, right? We all get around one person and we look at that one person, it's found in the Savior who is Jesus Christ. Look at this, it says, and grant you to be of the same mind with one accord according to Christ Jesus.

[ 21 : 38 ] The only unifying thing we will ever be able to claim is a common Savior. God. It is a supernatural work of God focusing on the Son of God who is Christ Jesus.

We see this. Now what impact will that have? Look at verse 6. So that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is it that God so desperately wants the body to be united? Why is it that the Savior tries to unify the body together? It's because there is a great power found in one voice glorifying His name.

Why is it that Satan goes to such efforts and such desperate lengths to disrupt the body? To put thoughts in your mind and my mind to cause there to be bitterness and even animosity between brothers and sisters in faith.

Why is it that he begins to magnify the little things we have that are different from one another instead of magnifying the Savior we have that is the same as one another? Why is it that he begins to put a magnifying glass on my faults and a magnifying glass on your faults instead of magnifying our Savior?

[ 22 : 52 ] Why is it? It's because when we have one voice and one purpose for His glory the world will take notice. There is power in a united body.

And the church will never with one voice glorify the Lord and Savior as long as they live in discord. We see the impact of unity.

The world cannot resist a church that is united. When the world I've said it before when the world looks in and says everyone in that place is different. What in the world do they have in common? How can they gather together and not kill one another? Then they have to say there must be something to that Jesus. There has to be. What a beautiful thing it is.

We see the impact of unity. Number three, not only do we focus on the impact that unity can have in the world, not only do we focus on the opportunity we have to do good, number three, we must focus on the example before us.

[ 23 : 58 ] We must focus because all of our focus is on Christ and the work which He has done. Look at what it says in verse three. For even Christ did not please Himself. For even Christ did not please Himself.

As it is written, the reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me. For even Christ did not please Himself. If your newfound freedom in Christ leads you to thinking about yourself and pleasing yourself and now what can I do rather than what can I do for someone else? All of a sudden we have a misplaced focus because the Bible says not even Christ pleased Himself. And if there was anyone who ever walked the face of the earth who deserved to live a life of self-pleasure, it was Jesus Christ.

Because the Bible says all things were created by Him, through Him, and what? For Him. They were for His purposes. Think of the things that He didn't even have a home to go to. He didn't even have a bed to lay His head in. This self-pleasure thing was completely absent from Him. He didn't even please Himself. What an example. And we move on. It says in verse seven concerning the unity of the church, here's the example, therefore accept one another.

[ 25 : 11 ] You say, well, wait a minute, Pastor, I'm looking around the room and there's some people in here I'm not so sure I can accept. Pastor, you know, I don't know, maybe I don't even want to accept you, Pastor, maybe there's some faults and I'll be honest with you, there are some times I look in the mirror and I don't want to accept myself either.

But, you know, I have problems, I have faults, and we all do. And you say, well, Pastor, it sounds good in theory, but I just don't know if I can do it. Well, look at the example before you. He says, therefore accept one another.

And isn't it hard when the scripture gives an example that you can't even argue with, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. You know why I must accept you? Because Jesus accepted me.

And I know who I am. I know the faults that I have. I know the failures that I make. I know the mistakes that plague my life. I know the stumblings that are always present within me. I know me better than I know you. And if Jesus accepted me, then I better accept you. Because if I'm welcomed into his presence, then by all means, so are you.

[ 26 : 14 ] This is why Paul could write, I am the chief of sinners. Christ Jesus died to redeem sinners of whom I am the foremost of all. Why could Paul eat with anyone?

Why could he sit at the table with anyone? Why could he accept anyone? Because he knew Christ had accepted him. Friend, listen to me. The next time you have a hard time accepting someone into the body that may not look like you, talk like you, act like you, or have the freedoms you possess, I want you to remember something.

Jesus accepted you. And what an example. What an example. We see the example to follow.

And now we see this example really being laid out. Look at what it says. For I say that Christ has become a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy as it is written.

And then Paul gives a number of verses referring to the Gentiles coming to faith in Christ.

Understanding that this is not a New Testament illustration. This is not just a New Testament truth. It is an Old Testament truth lived out in New Testament reality.

[ 27 : 23 ] And you say, why did Paul put this here? I wrestled with that most of the week. Why did Paul put this here now? It's because in Christ, this great example, we have Christ uniting two groups of people that would never live in unity apart from Christ.

Jew and Gentile. One of the most divisive groups of people that have ever lived on the face of the earth is the Jews. And God called them apart.

He called Abram out of the land of the early Chaldeans. He made from Abram the nation of the Jewish people. He made Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, and He set them apart. We see this when they left Egypt, they were set apart.

When they went into Babylon, they were set apart. When they came out of Babylon, they were set apart. They didn't even intermarry or intermingle with the Samaritans because they were half Jews. So it wasn't enough just to be half Jew.

You had to be 100% Jew. They had their lineage traced back all in the temple there. They knew their birth or they knew their right. They knew who was of the lineage of David. They knew who had the right to be king.

[ 28 : 21 ] They knew all of these things. Everything was meticulously kept. The purity of the people was there. God told them to remain pure. God told them to be set apart. And they wouldn't intermarry with anyone around them.

Everyone else was Gentiles. There were Jews and Gentiles. That was all that made up the face of the earth. But in Christ, He has reconciled the two. Paul says, for there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but we are all one in Christ.

Isn't that amazing? That if Christ could reconcile the irreconcilable, if He could bring together Jew by fulfilling the promises God gave the Jewish nation, and if He could bring in the Gentiles by living out the promises God extended to the Gentiles, if He was faithful to the Old Testament promises of God to the Jewish nation in particular, and then He fulfilled the promises to the world given, in general, and Jesus did it both.

Listen to me. It is amazing. Every promise God gave a particular group of people, that is the Jews, Jesus fulfilled. Every promise God extended to the world, that is the Gentiles, Jesus fulfilled, and He has reconciled the two.

He has brought them together. Now there is one church, one faith, one Savior, and if He could do that on such a grand scale, that isn't His example worth following, doing on a micro scale.

[ 29 : 45 ] in a local body of believers. What an example. What an example. We see that focus.

Fourth and finally, and I'll be through, we not only focus on the opportunity, we not only focus on the impact we may have as a united body, we not only focus on the example, here we focus on the possibility of hope.

Faith has the ability to offer us something the world can never offer, though it often promises. that is hope. I don't care how far you go, I don't care how much you travel, I don't care how many great experiences you have, this world will never give you hope.

Because for every great experience, there's also a devastating series of events. For every goose bump of pleasure, there are chill bumps of sadness.

This world simply cannot offer you hope. If you look at this world through any eyes of reality, you understand that this world is fading and passing away. Isaiah said it a long time ago.

Somehow another, Braden gets a magazine in the mail, a magazine that I can't even read the letters from the editor or letters to the editor on, it's on astronomy.

[ 31 : 05 ] Some of you are a lot smarter than I am, and maybe I could bring it to you and you could decipher it for me, but it's very complicated and it's very intellectual. But I laughed the other day as I was trying to read one of those magazines.

While Braden gets it, our five-year-old, I don't know, okay? But he does. It's great. And I was reading a letter in there, one of those scholarly types, and they were talking about all of the science that is proving of the heavens expanding and how the stars are moving further and further away from one another.

And they got into all this scientific jargon, and I just started laughing. I put it down, and I said, all they had to do was read the book of Isaiah, when Isaiah said in 500 B.C. that God causes the heavens to expand.

But they took four pages in this magazine to tell me that the heavens were expanding, and Isaiah said it in a verse. And I love it when science begins to catch up with Scripture.

Scripture. And this world tries to explain things in such a complicated manner, when really they're so simple. This world can't give you hope.

[ 32 : 17 ] Because even science is showing you the world is deteriorating, it's falling apart. God says it's going to happen that way, by the way, okay? He's going to make all things new. This world just can't give you that, but look at what the Scripture says here.

The Scripture says faith shows us the possibility of hope. Let's go back to verse 4. I skipped it, and then we'll go down to verse 13.

Verses 4 and 13, really, are where you see this possibility of hope. For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction. What is that? That's the Word of God, right? Why do you have the Bible in your hands? Is it so that it can maintain space? Why do you have it? Maybe you have it on your phone. Is it because it's a cool app? I don't know, but it was written, it says, for our instruction.

Look at this. So that, why do we need instruction from the Word of God? So that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

[ 33 : 15 ] You see here, first of all, that hope is tied to the understanding and application of the Word of God. I have made it my aim in pastoral ministry to make preaching primary, ministry, that it would be the number one thing on my list.

For one, I see it in the book of Acts, that they would give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Number two, I see this is because the best hope I can offer you, the best and only hope I can ever give you, is an understanding of the Word of God and the motivation to live it out.

It says here that through the encouragement, that is the knowledge, and the perseverance, that is the application of the Scripture, we might have hope.

You want to know why there are so many hopeless Christians? It's because they don't even know what God has promised them in His Word. They don't know the great truths.

Friend, I don't encourage you to get in the Word of God because I think it's a good habit, though I think it is. I don't encourage you to get in the Word of God because I think it's a checkmark you need to put in your daily life, though it's a good one to put there.

[ 34 : 27 ] I don't encourage you to get in the Word of God because I think you need to get smarter, though I think we all should. You need to get in the Word of God because I want you to know all that God has promised He will do for you.

Because as you begin to understand what He says to you, it doesn't matter what this world says or does to you. There is hope in the Word of God. Here's the good news. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement that is.

It is His work can do that. Now look at verse 13. Here's another one of those. Now may the God.

Look at verse 13. Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

Now all of a sudden it's accepting these things through faith. Now may the God of hope. Not only do you have hope given through the Word, you have hope given through the person or the relationship. Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

I love this. So that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Not too many years ago, Billy Graham did a thing.

[ 35 : 36 ] He began to do televised. He could no longer do crusades. So they would always around his birthday do televised messages.

My hope America is what they would call them. This was before his death and they would always do it. I think they started it somewhere around his 90th birthday. My hope in America. My hope, my hope.

And everywhere you looked and everywhere you went, every bookstore you went into, that word hope was all over the book cover. Everyone was looking for hope. Everyone wants to know that there's something to believe in.

There's something that is everlasting. There's something that is sure. There's something that will not fade or pass away. The world desperately needs hope. Here Paul writes for us that the believer has the opportunity to abound in hope.

That you don't wake up every morning depressed because you don't think it's going to work out. You wake up with one of those annoying, optimistic outlooks.

[ 36 : 44 ] You ever met someone who always seemed like they thought it was all going to work out? I mean, they just got on your nerves because no matter what happened, no matter how bad they went, they seem to be whistling and they seem to be going along and they're like, it'll be fine.

It'll happen. It's okay. It's okay. It's okay. You ever met someone like that? It is good to be like that. Because the Bible says that through the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, you can abound in hope.

So what if it all falls apart? So what if it all goes up in smoke? I got news for you. Peter tells us it will all go up in smoke. But by the time it all goes up in smoke, I'm in his presence in glory.

I'm not living for what's going to go up in smoke. I'm living for he who is causing it to go up in smoke. So what if it all messes up? The Holy Spirit's told me he'll call me home before them.

Abounding in hope. Why do we take the opportunity to do good? Why are we striving for an impact of unity? Why do we effortlessly follow the example of Christ?

[ 38 : 02 ] It's because the Holy Spirit has told us there is hope for tomorrow. I believe the church will be better tomorrow than it is today, no matter what the statistics tell me.

Starting Tuesday, I will be at the Southern Baptist Convention business meetings, which if you ever get bored at a World Trade Baptist church business meetings and you want to know what a real business meeting comes to look like, drive down to Birmingham. I'll give you a yellow card and I'll let you see 10,000 Southern Baptists argue with one another.

But anyhow, I'll go down there and I'll hear all the statistics and I'll hear all the demise. X amount of Southern Baptist churches are closing every year.

We're falling behind. This isn't doing good. This isn't working. But you know what? The King is still on the throne. He's still calling people to Himself.

He's still giving us an opportunity to serve Him. And no matter how bleak the world may look, make it look, there is still hope. And we can abound in hope.

[ 39 : 09 ] What a joy to know faith focused. Let's pray. Lord, I thank You so much for this day. God, I thank You for everything You've done for each one of us.

Lord, for every opportunity to bring You glory. Every opportunity to live our lives for Your sake. Lord, I pray You would change the things in me that need to be changed.

God, that You would begin with me. Lord, to call me closer to Your presence. To live for Your glory. For Your name's sake. Lord, if there's one here who doesn't know You, maybe they don't know anything of that hope.

Maybe they don't know anything of that peace and that joy. Oh God, would You work in their heart. Would You lead them to the Savior who loves them so much. Lord, for those of us who do, may our lives live with a newfound focus.

A focus for Your glory and honor. And it's in the sweet name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[ 41 : 16 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.