

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY THIRTY-SEVEN

We Are One . . . or Are We?

Romans 15:1–13

Christians will always have disagreements. There will always be those who hold differing opinions. It has nothing to do with our love for one another, or at least it should not. The Lord did not pray that we would be uniformed but unified. There's a difference.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WE enjoy hearing great music performed by renowned symphony orchestras. The impeccable harmony, the perfect volume, and the oneness of sound bring us so much joy and exhilaration, awe and wonder, peace and solace, and beauty and elegance. The trumpets, the violins, the cellos, the clarinets, the drums—different instruments playing in unity delight our soul. *They are many, yet one.*

Like an orchestra, the church consists of people of all ages and personalities from various backgrounds and with different gifts. Together, we follow Christ, our great Conductor, as He blends us into one sound. If we overshadow or underplay, He reminds us to listen to one another and to not compete for attention but to make every effort to blend and harmonize. The goal? We're to share the beautiful music of the gospel with the world and bring glory to God.

Yes, *Christian unity glorifies God*. “Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you,” Paul urged the Roman believers, “so that God will be given glory” (Romans 15:7).

In the prior *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we learned the personal mechanics of unity—each of us balancing on the tightrope of Christian liberty by letting love trump our freedom. In this Bible study, we'll look at the big picture—when Christ's orchestra, the church, plays in full unity with each other.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

*The LORD is my strength and shield.
I trust him with all my heart.
He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.
I burst out in songs of thanksgiving. (Psalm 28:7)*

Approach God's throne of grace with a heart filled with thanksgiving. Think of His strength that sustains you. Recall the many ways He has helped you. Burst out in praise as you get to turn to the pages of Romans to receive enduring truths from your God, who is your strength and shield!



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul concluded Romans 14 with three principles regarding disputable matters. First, we should *be considerate*—don't do anything that “might cause another believer to stumble” (Romans 14:21). Second, we should *be convinced*—“don't feel guilty for doing something [you] have decided is right” (14:22). Third, *be consistent*—don't “do anything you believe is not right” (14:23).

On the heels of these principles, Paul continued his exhortation to the strong—that is, to those who have a firm footing in Christ's freedom and believe that “it's all right to eat anything” (14:2). Listen in.



Observation: Instructions to the Roman Congregation

Take the first step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method by observing attentively how Paul's flow of thought continues in [Romans 15:1–13](#).¹

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Unity Among God's People—Romans 15:1–7

In *Romans 15:1–2*, what was Paul's exhortation to these mature believers in the Roman congregation? To whom did Paul point as our model in *15:3–4*?

Observe *15:3–4* carefully again. Paul quoted the lament in *Psalms 69:9* and applied it to Christ, and then he emphasized the value of Scripture as our reliable source of hope. What do you observe in *Romans 15:4* that shows the *value*, the *relevance*, and the *purpose* of Scripture?

Look at the practical value of Scripture. Ultimately, the Scriptures give you hope.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Is there any hope of unity in the church? Yes! *With God, anything is possible*, says Paul, bursting out in a benediction as he wrapped his thoughts around unity. Summarize his prayer for believers then and now in *15:5–7*.

Consider God's Son—Romans 15:8–13

Paul again turned to Jesus as the perfect example of servanthood in *Romans 15:8–12*. Why did Jesus come to the Jews? What did Jesus do for gentiles? Why did Paul quote the Old Testament passages about gentiles?

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What hopeful message does Paul’s benediction in [Romans 15:13](#) convey?

Christ came as a servant. And who were those people for whom He came? Well, first there was the circumcision, a reference to the Jews, verse 8. And then He also came for the gentiles, verses 9 through 12. Think of the difference. He called us all into one body—the church. All of us together in one church.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Many Instruments, One Orchestra, One Accord

The church is one orchestra but with many instruments. In order to play with one accord, Paul exhorted the strong in the Roman congregation to “bear the weaknesses of those without strength” rather than pleasing themselves ([Romans 15:1](#) NASB). Look up the Greek verb, [bastazo](#), “bear” at [billmounce.com](#). Explain the meaning of this verse in simple terms and use an analogy to describe the point.

We feel for them. Our hearts go out to them. One person’s strength is to compensate for the other’s weaknesses. Now, you know what that takes, don’t you? Well, it takes unselfishness. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In [Romans 15:5–7](#), Paul told the Roman believers to “accept” each other. Look up the Greek verb, [proslambano](#), “accept” at [billmounce.com](#). Also look at [15:5–7](#) in the J. B. Phillips and the Amplified translations. How can we “be of the same mind” (NASB) and “accept” one another when we’re so different?

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How can I be “of the same mind” if the person next to me is so different? The secret, of course, is that we claim the same One in common—Christ. I’ve never known Christ to bring disunity in a local church body. I mean, if Christ is the center and He is the head and He is the model, there is unity.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to [Romans 15:13](#), because of God’s Son, we’re filled with joy and peace, abounding in triumphant hope. This hope is “not a tentative wish that may or may not come true” but “an assured expectation based on a promise of God.”² Read [15:13](#) in the J. B. Phillips, MSG, and the Amplified translations. Rewrite this benediction in your own words.

Let me tell you what happens when that kind of endurance, peace, and hope work their way out of our love for one another: the neighbors notice. The greatest tool of evangelism is the love of believers for one another.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Playing in the Orchestra of Christ

As musicians fix their eyes on the conductor and respond to his or her slightest movements, we follow the lead of our Lord Jesus. Note Jesus’ humility in [Philippians 2:1–11](#). What touches you the most about our great Savior choosing to set aside His privileges for our sake?

Now, if there’s ever lived a person who had the right to please Himself, you know it’s Christ. He was perfect. He knew no sin. He came from a sinless past. He was in the resplendent glory of the Godhead before there ever was matter or world or time . . . and when it was His occasion to come to this earth and become a man to die for the sins of the world, He didn’t please Himself.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Having been united in Christ, we ought to make every effort to maintain the unity that He won for us (*1 Corinthians 12:12–13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:1–6*). However, unity does not mean uniformity, people pleasing, or compromising our principles. Strong disagreements sometimes happen between believers (*Acts 15:36–41; Galatians 1:6–10; 2:11–14*). What can we learn from these passages?

There are some people who are doing wrong, and they want your approval. Or, to make matters more complicated, they want to control you. And by dominating you to move into their sphere or their realm in agreement is to compromise your principles. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How do Jesus' actions in *John 13:4–5, 12–17* and His prayer in *17:20–23* highlight the significance of unity, humility, and vulnerability in light of our role as Christ's body in the world?

You know what it takes to wash the other person's feet? It takes humility. Love overlooks the smell, overlooks the color, overlooks the size. Love washes feet. It's humility. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Play in One Accord in the Orchestra of Christ!

This last step of *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, application, enables us to live out what the passage says and means. One orchestra, many musicians playing different instruments, one accord. Which of the biblical principles discussed in your study has the Holy Spirit emphasized to you as a player in Christ's orchestra?

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You must have a servant's heart not to push for your way. When you're under the control of the Holy Spirit, you listen. You work. You give. You take. You blend. You harmonize. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

During His earthly ministry, Jesus displayed humility and vulnerability. Express your heartfelt desire to love others in a humble and vulnerable manner.

Paul put his faith in “the God of hope,” with whom everything is possible, including Christians living together in unity. Through the indwelling power of God’s Spirit and the abiding presence of Christ, we can start building bridges of unity today. Will you commit to bringing Jesus’ prayer for unity to life in your church? Just think of the beautiful music you’ll make!



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for accepting me in Christ. Help me to love people in a humble and vulnerable manner. Help me to listen well to others, to know when to hold back. May they see Your Son's love in my words, attitudes, and actions. In His name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Romans*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 6 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 341.

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2008, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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