

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY THIRTY-EIGHT

Encouraging Words of Affirmation

Romans 15:14–16

A testimony shared, energized by the Spirit, is effective. An act of kindness leaves the receiver taken aback. A visit to the sick, a sermon preached, a warning given, a class taught, a child loved, a discouraged soul lifted up—done in the power of the Spirit—oh, the rewards await you.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

A patient who has been in the hospital for weeks and has had no visitors. A young man who meets his work deadlines in a small office and yet is unnoticed. An aged widow who lives in a retirement home, alone, out of touch, and forgotten. The world can be a dreadfully lonely place.

We are the body of Christ. Our mission is to impact this world with His touch. But if we spend all our lives in and around the church, we'll isolate ourselves. We'll forget the real needs of real people who live difficult lives. And we'll begin to think that this is all about us. And we'll miss our true purpose for living: touching lives, one person at a time.

To fulfill our mission, we need to be aware of the issues that plague the world around us. As His body, we must be engaged with those who don't know the name of Christ. To have an eternal impact, *we must stay in touch.*

In the prior *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we learned that the church is Christ's orchestra, and that we can emit one harmonious sound when the different instruments play in one accord. In this Bible study, we'll welcome the Holy Spirit's touch to show our hearts how to be engaged like the apostle Paul—*using words of affirmation* and relentlessly seeking the lost for Christ.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

*My soul, wait in silence for God alone,
For my hope is from Him. (Psalm 62:5 NASB)*

Pause. Rest all your struggles on His strong shoulders and let the wonder of His might calm your fears. Thank Him for His Spirit who has empowered you to live a life that is beyond your ability to live. Express the joy of knowing the Faithful One who has been guiding your every step in your study of Paul's letter to the Romans.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul addressed his letter to a group of believers living under the tyranny of Emperor Nero. During Nero's reign (AD 54–68), the Roman Empire became more and more hostile toward Christians. Even before Christians were blamed for the burning of Rome in AD 64, they had become increasingly despised. So, they needed much mutual support and encouragement.

Paul used the last five chapters of his letter to tell the Roman believers to stay connected and not get isolated. Their love for one another ought to be “free of hypocrisy” (Romans 12:9 NASB). They should be “devoted to one another in brotherly love,” (12:10 NASB) “contributing to the needs of saints, practicing hospitality” (12:13 NASB).

He instructed them that “love does no wrong to a neighbor” (13:10 NASB). Rather than living for themselves (14:7), they ought to “accept one another” as Christ has accepted them (15:7 NASB). He crowned his teaching with a hope-filled benediction:

I pray that God, the source of all hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (15:13)

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Then Paul crafted an epilogue for his letter—six sections dedicated to the following subjects:

1. Encouraging words of affirmation (Romans 15:14–16)
2. Personal words about himself (15:17–29)
3. Prayer requests (15:30–33)
4. Personal greetings (16:1–16)
5. A strong warning (16:17–24)
6. Closing benediction (16:25–27)

Let's observe how Paul crafted a profound affirmation, reminding them of their identity in Christ, celebrating their faithfulness in service, and urging them to seek the lost.



Observation: How Paul Encouraged the Roman Believers

Observation is like unwrapping a passage of Scripture as you would open a Christmas gift. Read [Romans 15:14–16](#) closely and enjoy God's gift of truth for you.

Paul's Encouraging Words—Romans 15:14

Observe [Romans 15:14](#) in the NASB and note Paul's encouragement. What three qualities of his readers did Paul point out?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Paul's Commitment to Evangelism—Romans 15:15–16

How did Paul describe himself in [Romans 15:15–16](#)? What did he bring to the gentiles? How does he serve as a model for us?

Paul sees himself as a priest, and what he's saying is, "I'm passionately committed to the world outside my own." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Interpretation: Encouraging Words of Affirmation

Interpretation helps us discover what the passage means. Paul said that the Roman brothers and sisters were “full of goodness” (*Romans 15:14* NASB). In Greek, the word translated “full” means “full to overflowing,” like Peter’s net “full of large fish” (John 21:11 NASB). Their goodness spilled over like Peter’s great catch of fish, and their knowledge filled, or “pervaded,” every part of their minds and hearts.

How do these qualities of goodness and knowledge complement one another to make a well-rounded, mature Christian?

The word for “goodness” is a word that suggests moral and ethical goodness. It would include kindness and thoughtfulness and even charity toward those in need. . . . It isn’t absolute knowledge. Only God is omniscient. Only He knows past, present, and future. But these people—get this—had a sound and significant understanding of the truth of God. His will, His way, His working.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Paul also applauded the Roman believers for being “able to admonish one another” (*Romans 15:14* NASB)—which the MSG renders as “capable of guiding and advising one another” and the AMP translates as competent to “counsel and instruct one another.” How are these qualities best expressed among Christians today? Why are they so vital for a thriving church?

One word is nous, N-O-U-S: “the mind.” The other is tithemi: “to place, or to put.” Together, it means: “to put something in the mind.” You are empowered to put something in the mind of someone else that will help him or her. Sometimes, it’s a confrontation. Sometimes it’s just simple counsel. Sometimes, it’s a word of encouragement. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Paul described himself as a priest ministering to the nations in [Romans 15:15–16](#). How do you understand these verses? Although you're not an apostle like Paul, you can follow his lead. In what ways?

A priest stood between the people and their God. For Paul, it meant that he stood between the nations and their God. Though he was Jewish in birth and in training, he saw beyond his own race and realized God had called him to reach out and give the gentiles the gospel, the good news of Christ.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Becoming Engaged with the World Around Us

Through his encouragement of the believers in Rome, Paul was modeling what the writer to the Hebrews encouraged all Christians to do in [Hebrews 10:24–25](#). How do these verses correlate with our passage?

We may be filled with goodness and knowledge, but what role does the Holy Spirit play in our expressions of those qualities, according to [Ephesians 5:18–20](#)?

We remain depraved individuals in our old nature, but there is a new nature that comes with the filling of the Spirit and the presence of the Spirit in our lives. That new nature evidences acts of goodness. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Application: Examine Yourself!

As we bring these principles into the light of everyday living, *think first of your life*. Resist comparing yourself with anyone else. Ask yourself the following questions: “How can I express Christ’s goodness and the knowledge of Christ’s hope to those around me?” Record your answer with a prayerful note.

Being full of knowledge won’t happen by osmosis because you sit next to somebody else. It will come because you personally are disciplined in the growing up of your life in the Scriptures. Thank God we have this Book. From it we are guided along a path that will never lead us astray.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Next, *think about your ministry*. How can you grow in your passion for the lost? How can you be more consciously and frequently dependent on the Lord? Note your answers with a prayerful attitude.

Let goodness and knowledge spill over into your practical interactions today. As you do, here’s a prayer to help you focus on Christ and to remind you to depend on His Spirit within you:

Lord, today before I even get up, I want You to know that this is Your day. I’m going to face some things today that I dread. I’m going to be in touch with some individuals who are hard to be with. I’m going to have some challenges that I don’t yet know about. So, Lord, I lean on You today. I place myself at Your disposal. Use my vocal cords and speak Your words. Give me discernment, gentleness, and a willing spirit to learn and to keep growing. Help me to listen to people who love me. Without You, I can do nothing. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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A FINAL PRAYER

In your own words, respond to the precious truths you received from the Faithful One who loves you unconditionally. May His Son, who became a man to die for the world, encourage you to be engaged—making an impact in this world with His touch!

ENDNOTE

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?](#)"

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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