

JUDGES & ROMANS: RUINED TO RIGHTEOUS

Lesson 18: Righteous Church

Key Verse: Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.~ Romans 13.10

Watches no longer merely tell time. Now they can provide key data that give us a broad picture of our physical and mental health. Smartwatches use key metrics found in our daily heart rate, our nightly sleep quality, and our daily caloric count to develop a general picture of our physical and our mental health. Smartwatches help us understand the influence to our health of what we put in our mouths and of the challenges our bodies face in one day. Members of **The Church** can do more than merely attend weekly church and a Bible study. Their willingness to serve in accordance with God's desire for them operates like a metric that reveals **The Love of God** to the world. Those preoccupied by the Love of God know how the influence of their service to their fellow Christians impacts the health of their local church, as well as The Church united globally in Christ. When *all* of God's people serve Him in one accord under the truth of the Love of God the result is "one voice [glorifying] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15.6) What a breathtaking and arresting Bride with a striking and compelling voice!

God of Love, Thank You for Your Church. Thank You for providing Your Grace so that we may serve one another in honor and glory of You. Thank You for the direct language of Paul, and for the helpful servants who help us understand Your will for Your Church. Convict us of where we are sinning against one another. Convict us of any mindset of superiority or inferiority. Tell us clearly how we are to serve You in Your Church. Please make our service a beautiful adornment to Your Bride. Make Your Bride gracious and beautiful, revealing Your Love and the Love of Your Son to all the world.

Romans 12.1-15.13 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. **3** For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; **7** if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; **8** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. **11** Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. **17** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." **20** To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

CH 13 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. **3** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, **4** for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **5** Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. **6** For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. **7** Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. **11** Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to

wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. **12** The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. **13** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. **14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

CH 14 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. **2** One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. **3** Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. **4** Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. **5** One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

7 For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. **8** For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. **9** For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. **10** Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; **11** for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." **12** So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. **13** Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. **14** I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. **15** For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. **16** So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. **17** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18** Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. **20** Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. **21** It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. **22** The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. **23** But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

CH 15 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. **2** Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. **3** For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." **4** For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, **6** that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. **8** For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, **9** and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." **10** And again it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." **11** And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." **12** And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Diamonds: Just as the life and story of Samson revealed a picture of God's nation, Israel, so too does Paul reveal a picture of God's people in 12.1-15.13. Just as the life and story of Samson was full of caution and dire warnings, so too are Paul's exhortations and admonitions in this week's passage. The story of Samson also pointed forward to the further fracturing within God's people and the gut-wrenching tragedies on the horizon for God's people.¹ In contrast, Paul's letter to the

¹Lesson 19 covers the topic of sexual violence. For those who have journeyed towards healing from trauma, please know it may be wise to re-engage the resources and coping skills you have received in the past during this study. We will NEVER attempt to re-open wounds that God is healing. We will NEVER ask you to re-visit your trauma. However, studying the book of Judges may trigger trauma-induced pain. Please be prayerful and reach out for help.

If you have a trauma that needs healing, know that there are godly resources. We have curated some books on a variety of topics that keep your healing and hope in Christ at the forefront of your journey in healing. In addition, you are empowered to reach out to your pastor and/or a trusted mental health professional. **If you are in crisis, please call 988.** You are a prisoner of HOPE in your *Abba, Father!* (Zechariah 9.12; Romans 8.15)

Roman church offers hope in God as the source and strength of their unity so that the Glory of God and His Love, as demonstrated in Jesus, is revealed to not only one another but also to the unbelieving world.

1. How does Paul define “spiritual worship” in Romans 12.1?

Several phrases in The Message translation of Romans 12.1 connect Paul’s teaching of the importance of a godly mindset in contrast to the ungodly mindset of God’s people in Judges 13-16: “Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking...Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.” Samson “perfectly displayed the spiritual state of Israel. They were strong in the Lord but kept whoring themselves out to other gods. They were totally assimilated into the Philistine culture – prepared to avenge their own honor by not God’s.”²

2. Paul teaches that our mindset, or what we think, is imperative in order to live daily as an “offering”, or “living sacrifice”, to God. Using The Message (or your favorite Bible translation), read Romans 12.1-3. How does Paul establish our need to think correctly about God and ourselves as foundational to our ability to be a “living sacrifice”, or “offering”, to God? Why is our mindset, or how we think, critical?

Many of Paul’s exhortations in Romans 12.1-15.13 read like the placards and phrases on decorative wood found at craft fairs and the home decor section of stores. More than something to decorate the walls of our home, office, or back car bumper, Paul’s summary exhortations provide insight as he identifies key problems found in this multi-ethnic, Christ-following community. Paul’s focus is on the expression of God’s Love through Christ-like obedience found in the community of God’s people, The Church.

3. Using The Message translation of the Bible, scan Romans 12.4-15.13. Fill in the chart with *key phrases* that highlight Paul’s indicators of a godly mindset among God’s people (Paul’s do’s/don’ts). In other words, what phrases would you find on decorative wood at Paul’s craft booth? (Be creative and have fun! Don’t get stuck. Just do as many as you can!)

Romans 12	Romans 13	Romans 14	Romans 15
V 4-6:	V 1 (first sentences):	V 1:	V 1-2:
V 6-8:	V 6-8:	V 13-14:	V 7 (first sentences):
V 9-10:	V 8-10:	V 22-23:	
V 11-13:	V 11-14:		
V 14-16:			
V 17-19:			
V 20-21:			

² Mary Hambly by text, February 22, 2026

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The aim of the table above isn't merely a "do or don't do" list in performing "spiritual worship". Rather, like the data from a smartwatch, it gives us an overall picture of the health of our "spiritual worship". By informing us of where we need confession, where we need encouragement, and where we need to offer thanksgiving, we can intentionally focus so that our spiritual worship, our "believing lives", are "filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, brimming over with hope!" (Romans 15.13, The Message).

4. Jesus alluded that He was "the bridegroom" and that His Church, *all* of God's people, are His "Bride" (Matthew 25.1-13; Luke 5.33-35; Revelation 19.6-9; 22.17). Using any artistic expression, form a "picture" of Christ's Bride in the beauty of her Christ-like obedience (Romans 12.1-15.13, see your chart). You are encouraged to sing, paint, write, dance, use an instrument, knit, AI generate, or whatever!
5. How would you respond to a Bride who looked and acted like Christ (as exhorted by Paul in Romans 12.1-15.13, see your chart)? How do you think the unbelieving world would respond to such a Bride as you have depicted in artistic form (from Question 4)?

There are several phrases and topics within these chapters that can cause confusion or create strong opinions that lead to disunity within God's people. As such, each issue will be addressed within the context of its chapter. Paul uses two phrases in Romans 12 that indicate a disparity between fellow co-laborers in Christ in the areas of the amount of faith and of grace God dispenses (Romans 12.3, 6). The meaning of the word, "measure", in 12.3 has seven possible meanings, while Paul's use of the word "faith" in the same sentence creates the possibility of five meanings. Added to this (quite literally) is that the preposition "of" in the same sentence has two possible meanings. All told, there are "seventy possible combinations" from which to derive the exact meaning of Paul's phrase, "according to the measure of faith that God has assigned." (12.3)!³

By tying Paul's phrase to the command to evaluate ourselves, it is suggested that we are to "measure ourselves" (*metron*) by "the gospel of the cross".⁴ Dr. Keller re-phrases Paul's statement, "All of you have been given your saving faith in Christ crucified, and that is how you are to measure yourselves."⁵ This unity of all God's people under Christ's cross means we are to consider ourselves as one family, whose members God loves equally. While Paul emphasizes that we are not to value ourselves as superior, we also are not to devalue ourselves as inferior. To think of ourselves with superiority or inferiority influences Paul's following exhortation to serve ("the grace given to us" V 6) God's family as one body. Paul's list of service opportunities (or the areas in which God's grace enables us to serve) in Romans 12.6-8 isn't exhaustive, nor is its purpose to suggest the church administer a spiritual gifts test. Paul spends more energy describing the *heart* of God's servant that overflows into the actions exhorted and encouraged in Romans 12.9-21.

6. Describe the role of "genuine love", or "lov[ing] from the center of who you are", (12.9) in enabling the attributes and characteristics of God's servants in Romans 12. How does this love mirror the love poured out at Christ's cross?

Romans 13 is not a treatise on government and state relations. There were no Christian or Christ-professing governing authorities during Paul's time, so his commands and exhortations are addressing the radical relationship a Christ-follower will have with their pagan governing authorities. Rather than developing a constitutional argument for the formation of a government, or a supreme court argument for their separation or integration into government, Paul is calling God's people to be godly citizens with a heavenward perspective as they engage with their government.

It may disappoint some that Paul's statements in Romans 13.1-7 are not arguments for or against the death penalty, or about allowing or disallowing civil disobedience or protests, nor to promote libertarianism or socialism. In fact, Paul's statements in this portion of his letter are not promoting Republicans, Democrats, or Independents. Instead, Paul is promoting God's sovereign authority over the government and governing authorities. Jesus did this too at His trial (John

³ Stott, p. 327, quoting C.E.B. Cranfield's mathematical solution derived through the many possible meanings of the individual words in this phrase.

⁴ Stott, p. 327

⁵ Keller, p. 110

19.9-11). Paul is promoting the radical idea that Christ-followers are to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12.21). Paul isn’t defining government as the evil that must be overcome! Instead, in Romans 13.1-7, Paul is requiring Christ-followers to submit to God’s sovereign authority and His plan through obedience to Him in all areas of civil society. In doing so, we avoid being “overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Note here too, in the midst of these exhortations in Romans 13, once again Paul re-focuses our attention to love (13.8-10).

7. Read the following stories of God’s people who submitted to, or rebelled against, their governing authorities to God’s glory. What do you notice about whom they consistently obeyed and served? How does their obedience to God within their pagan governing authorities reveal God?

a. Exodus 1.15-2.10

b. Daniel 3

8. Notice God’s commands to His exiled people living under a pagan king whom God personally selected in Jeremiah 27.4-11 and 29.1-14. How do God’s commands to His exiled people echo Paul’s exhortations in Romans 13.1-7?

Paul’s reference to time and salvation’s call in Romans 13.11-12 are not prophetic of the date of Christ’s return⁶. Of course, Christ will return as soon as God commands! (Matthew 25.36) We are to remember that life is short. This perspective adds an intensity to how we are to use the time God has given for us to serve Him faithfully and with single-hearted devotion to Him on earth. In light of this perspective, we are to use the time God has given us to be nice to those whose “convictions of conscience” differ from what we are “fully convinced” of in our own mind (Romans 14.5, The Message and ESV).

The interpretation of Paul’s description of the “weak” is not of “will nor of character”, and not “a vulnerable Christian easily overcome by temptation, but a sensitive Christian full of indecision and scruples. What the weak lack is not strength of self-control but freedom of conscience.”⁷ The issues within this Christ-following community of protein vs. vegetables and (implied) Sabbath day observance were creating divisions based on strong opinions of what are often called “disputable issues”. “Disputable issues”, or “matters of conscience” (*dialogismoi*) are practices “about which God has not specifically spoken in His Word. He has not clearly forbidden nor clearly commanded these practices. So it is possible to move to one of two wrong ‘extremes’ when it comes to ‘disputable issues’. We must guard against thinking that almost every area is a disputable matter of conscience, *and* against the view that hardly any area is a disputable matter of conscience.”⁸

Paul is very clear in his commands and warnings in Romans 14. Again, his basis of appeal is love (14.15). In 14.23, we learn that everyone must faithfully follow their conscience before God. While we sin against one another when we are jerks about “disputable issues”, we also lead our fellow Christ-followers into sin when we use our freedom to encourage a fellow Christ-follower to violate their conscience before God. If their conscience before God doesn’t permit them the same freedom as ours, we are to respect and honor and encourage their obedience to God. Period.

9. Fill in the blank with a “disputable issue” with which you have struggled to allow fellow Christ-followers the freedom of their conscience before God: “Do not, for the sake of _____, destroy the work of God.” (14.20a)
-OR Read Romans 14.8-9 using the Bible translation, The Message. Where are you a “petty tyrant” to your brother or sister in Christ? (You will not share this answer in your group)

a. After spending time confessing before God, write out the steps you are taking towards “walking in love” alongside your fellow co-laborer in Christ. *Share some of these steps with your group.*

⁶ Keller, pp. 141-142, Stott, p. 355

⁷ Stott, p. 358

⁸ Keller, p. 146

The hope-filled call to unity, maturity, and anticipation of God's work in Romans 15.1-13 are an antidote to the harmful and sinful treatment we engage in against our fellow Christ-followers in Romans 14. They also solidify Paul's hope that his own people will join the "outsiders" under the tree brought forth from Jesse's root, "growing tall enough for everyone everywhere to see and take hope!" (Romans 15.12, The Message) Paul's exhortations and warnings in Romans 12-15 spur us to keep our mind and mindset preoccupied with the things of God, our heart singularly devoted to God, and our perspective heavenward in anticipation of Presence with God. Such a servant of God will find that their feet and mouths are God's instruments playing His tune under their Sovereign Maestro.

Deity: The Love of God⁹~ (Romans 15.1-3) "Even though our culture frequently misunderstands this attribute, reducing love to a feeling of unconditional affirmation, the Bible loves to exult in the love of God (1 John 4.7-12). Most poignantly, we see the love of God displayed in the sending and the sacrifice of His Son (John 3.16, 16.27; Romans 5.8; 1 John 4.10).

Although we think of God's love as one thing, earlier theologians helpfully distinguished among three kinds of Divine Love:

1. The love of benevolence: God's goodwill toward human beings
2. The love beneficence: God's kind actions toward His creatures
3. The love of complacency: God's satisfactory delight in Himself, in the Son, and those who are united to the Son

There is a great caution in reducing God to "a composite being instead of a simple being."¹⁰ This occurs when we elevate the Love of God beyond all His other attributes. "...we ought not suggest...that the Love of God is the true nature of God while omnipotence (or holiness or sovereignty or whatever) is the only attribute of God...The implication is that love is more central to the nature of God, truer to His real identity, than the other less essential attributes."¹¹

God is not the "sum of His attributes" all of which could be divided into a colorful pie chart. Instead, "God is whatever [attributes] He has. Every attribute is identical to His essence. He is not the composite of His attributes, some in greater and some in lesser amounts. God is a simple being without parts or pieces."¹²

10. Love is a constant thread woven throughout Romans 12.1-15.13. Why does Paul repeatedly remind his readers of the necessity of love?

Doctrine: The Church¹³~ (Romans 13.10) More than a local congregation of people, a building, or a religion, The Church is the assembly of the redeemed, those who have been called by God the Father to salvation as a gift of His Son, Jesus, the Christ (John 3.16, 6.37, 10.29). Born on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1-21, 38-47), its growth is powered by God's work through the Holy Spirit as the Lord draws sinners to Himself (Acts 2.47). At the Second Coming of Christ, The Church will be in the presence of her Savior for all eternity (1 Thessalonians 4.16-17; Revelation 22.3-5).

"*Ekklēsia*" is the Greek word meaning "those who are called out". The ancient world used this term to refer to citizens "called out" to administer civic affairs or defend the community in battle, as well as to refer more generally to any "assembly" or "congregation". In the New Testament, it is specifically used to describe the community of those called out by God from their slavery to sin through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 1.7, 8.28; 1 Corinthians 2.14; Ephesians 4.1; 1 Thessalonians 2.12; 2 Timothy 1.9; Hebrews 12.23; 1 Peter 5.10; Revelation 1.5). This community includes all people from "the Church Age" (Acts 1-2).

The Church is not a physical building where Christians meet, nor is it a religious institution, an ethical organization, or a sociopolitical association.

Old Testament prophets foretold details about both the Messiah's suffering (Isaiah 53.1-12) and His earthly kingdom (Isaiah 2.1-4, 9.6-7; Zechariah 14.8-21). At Jesus' first advent, the Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus as their King as well as

⁹ De Young, pp. 48-49, 57

¹⁰ DeYoung, p. 48

¹¹ DeYoung, p. 48

¹² DeYoung, p. 49

¹³ MacArthur & Mayhue, pp. 739-826

the kingdom He offered (Acts 2.22-36, 3.13-26). In between the time of Jesus' first advent and His promised second advent, or coming, God is accomplishing His Kingdom purposes through The Church (Matthew 21.42-43).

Finally, from the standpoint of salvation history, The Church exists to display the wisdom and mercy of God in this age (Romans 9.23-24; 1 Corinthians 1.20-31; Ephesians 3.10). From the standpoint of how The Church relates to its members, its purpose might be stated as existing to Glorify God (Ephesians 1.5-6, 12-14; 3.20-21; 2 Thessalonians 1.12). Thus, the purposes of The Church are broadly and briefly summarized as:

- Exalting God – Because God is zealous for His Glory, His people should likewise be consumed with a desire to glorify and exalt Him. Consequently, a faithful church is God-centered, not man-centered. (Isaiah 43.6-7; 48.9-11; 49.3; 1 Corinthians 6.20, 10.21; 1 Peter 2.9, 4.11)
- Edifying believers – A Christian's relationship with fellow Christians makes the transforming power of the gospel visible and verifiable, so that the message is proven to be as powerful as it claims. Edification takes place through the ministry of the Word, the mentoring of godly leadership, the selfless exercise of spiritual gifts, and the practice of the twenty "one another" commands in the New Testament. (Acts 20.32; 1 Corinthians 12.7, 14.26; Ephesians 4.11-12; 1 Thessalonians 5.11; 2 Timothy 3.15-17; 1 Peter 2.2, 4.10)
- Evangelizing the lost – In obedience to Jesus' commission in Matthew 28.18-20, a church will have a strong emphasis on evangelism, both locally and around the world. As sinners respond in saving faith to the message of the gospel, they are to be initiated into the church through baptism and disciplined in the church through sound teaching. Because believers understand the hope of eternal salvation and the converse reality of God's coming judgment, believers should be eager to proclaim the good news of salvation. Though The Church will continue to exalt Christ and edify one another in heavenly glory, evangelism is something that can be done only in this life. (Matthew 28.18-20; Mark 1.16-22, 2.14; John 3.16, 8.31; Hebrews 9.27-28)

Paul shifts from the accessibility of God in Romans 9-11 to how we evangelize to one another within The Church, forming a Grammy-winning "choir – not our voices only, but our very lives singing in harmony in a stunning anthem to the God and Father of our Master Jesus!" (Romans 15.6, The Message)

11. What harmonizing octave, or role, in your life is singing "a stunning anthem to God" by your service to your local church, and/or The Church (*all of God's people, globally*)?

12. Where have you been convicted that your pitch is out of tune and is not in harmony (see your chart, Q3)? In other words, where may you be "making life more difficult", "interfering with God's welcome", being "bossy", or refusing to "be a functioning part in Christ's body" (phrases from Romans 12.1-15.13, The Message)? What encouragement is God giving you towards becoming harmonious? (*In your group, focus your sharing on God's encouragement towards harmony*)

-OR- Perhaps you are not participating in this Grammy-winning choir (your local church and/or The Church). *Share with your group the steps you are taking to actively participate in a Grammy-winning choir:*

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:

Lecture Outline:

Aim: A Holy Bridegroom requires a holy Bride.

- I. Living Sacrifice (Romans 12.1-13.14) **T1:** Christ's holy Bride is a living sacrifice in active pursuit of Christlikeness.
 - a. How are you giving yourself to God as a living sacrifice?
 - b. What parts of yourself might you be refusing to lay on the altar?
 - c. Which of the world's customs or standards are keeping you from standing out as Christ's holy Bride?
- II. Loving Servant (Romans 14.1-15.13) **T2:** Christ's holy Bride is a loving servant empowered by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. In which current circumstance are you finding it difficult to love your siblings-in-Christ?
 - b. How is your flesh failing to give you what you need to love others well?
 - c. What do you need to do to surrender to the Holy Spirit to receive His love, joy, and power?

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