



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N2 January 12, 2025

ALWAYS WELCOME

"God's Invitation"

Romans 15:7-13

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Love

I unconditionally love
and forgive others.

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

1 John 4:10-12



How are
Christians to
respond to
diversity in the
church?



Salvation is for Jews and for Gentiles alike. God promised as much to Abraham when he said, "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Ge 12:3). Commenting on this very passage, Paul writes: "Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'" (Gal 3:8).

Of course, the gospel was preached to Jews before it was preached to Cornelius—a Gentile and "a devout God-fearing centurion." Luke devotes nearly two chapters in Acts to the story of Cornelius (10:1-11:18), emphasizing its importance. *First*, he tells his readers about Cornelius: how devout and God-fearing he was; how he gave generously to the needy and prayed to God regularly; how he had a vision and saw an angel, apparently while he was praying; and how he sent to Joppa for Peter (10:1-8).

Second, Luke tells his readers about Peter: how he went up on the roof to pray and fell into a trance; how he saw heaven open and a sheet full of all kinds of animals descend to earth—not once but three times; how the Lord told him to kill and eat the animals; and how he refused even though he was very hungry. He tells his readers how the Spirit told Peter to go with three Gentile men who were looking for him; and finally, how the men entered his house as his guests (vv. 9-23).

Third, he tells his readers what happened two days later when Peter arrived in Caesarea at Cornelius's house: how this Roman centurion with his family and friends were waiting to hear what God had commanded Peter to tell them; how the apostle told them about Jesus—who he was, what he did, and most importantly, "that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (vv. 24-43). Luke goes on to tell his readers how the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles and how astonished the Jewish believers were to see it happen (v. 44-48).

48).

Finally, he tells his readers what happened when Peter went to Jerusalem to defend his actions (11:1-18). He went to the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them (v. 3), which he knew was unlawful for a Jew (10:28). Concerned Jewish believers wanted an explanation, and Peter gave it to them. He told them how he had seen a vision; how he had learned not to call anything impure that God had made clean; how he had obeyed the Spirit and had gone to Caesarea without hesitation. He told them how the Holy Spirit came on the Gentiles just as he had on the Jews on the day of Pentecost and how, that being the case, he refused to oppose God; and how the Jewish believers in Jerusalem agreed with him, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (v. 18).

Luke had to tell his readers about Cornelius. He wrote Acts to tell them how the gospel spread from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, as well as to the ends of the earth. And so the gospel was destined to spread from Jews to Gentiles. Salvation is for everyone.

But the story of Gentile *inclusion* doesn't end there. As more Gentiles were added to the body of believers, churches became mixed congregations filled with people who shared a common faith but not a common way of life. Jewish Christians continued to live like Jews. Certain Jewish believers, belonging to the party of the Pharisees, demanded that Gentiles become Jews to be Christians, that is, they must be circumcised and live according to the law of Moses (Ac 15:5). But after much deliberation, the council sided with Paul and Barnabas. James announced its verdict: Gentiles simply needed to respect the sensitivities of Jewish Christians; they didn't have to become Jews in order to be Christians. This meant Jews and Gentiles had to lovingly accept one another (Ro 14:1); they were neither to judge one another nor to treat one another with contempt (v. 10). Discrimination was verboten in Christ's body.

Read Romans 15:7-13

7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed 9 and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

*"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;
I will sing the praises of your name."*

10 Again, it says,

"Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."

11 And again,

*"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples extol him."*

12 And again, Isaiah says,

*"The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
in him the Gentiles will hope."*

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read another translation

7 Receive one another, then, just as Christ also received you, to God's glory. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of God's truth to confirm the promises made to the fathers, 9 and thus the Gentiles glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, **"Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praises 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 praise him."** 12 And again Isaiah says, **"The root of Jesse will come, and the one who rises to rule over the Gentiles, in him will the Gentiles hope."** 13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "accept" in v. 7.
- Box "just as" indicating *comparison* (or perhaps *cause*) in v. 7.
- Box "in order" indicating *purpose* in v. 7.
- Bracket "to bring praise to God" in v. 7.
- Box "For" indicating reason in v. 8.
- Bracket "servant of the Jews" in v. 8.
- Bracket "on behalf of God's truth" in v. 8.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in vv. 8, 13.
- Circle "Gentiles" in vv. 9 (2x), 10, 11, 12.
- Underline "joy and peace" in v. 13.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The fact that Paul exhorts his readers to “accept one another” implies what?
 2. Paul identifies two groups within the church that need to “stop passing judgment on one another” (14:12). Identify the two groups and describe how they are judging one another (cf. 14:2).
 3. These two groups should “accept one another.” Why so?
 4. Give an example of the same kind of *divisive* problem in the contemporary church.
 5. Describe the impact of the unsolved problem on practicing hospitality (Ro 12:13; cf. 16:23).
 6. Explain the meaning of verse 7, first if “just as” indicates *comparison*, and second, if it indicates *cause*.
 7. Explain the two *purposes* behind Jesus becoming a servant of the Jews.
 8. Why would Paul quote four Old Testament passages that refer specifically to Gentiles?
 9. Paul’s prayer-wish nicely fits its context. How so?
 10. **Discussion:** Give this passage a “relevance” score from 1 (not very relevant) to 5 (extremely relevant) and talk about your score.
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Commentary On The Text

Paul wraps up his discussion of how believers in the church, who have contrary convictions regarding dietary restrictions, keeping the Sabbath as well as other sacred days, and drinking wine, are to view one another. One commentator writes: “There were within the church Christian groups who followed some aspects of the Jewish lifestyle and other Christian groups, probably the Gentile majority, who despised or were arrogant toward those Christians who followed some aspects of the Jewish lifestyle and who saw little reason to welcome or fellowship with them” (Ben Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 332-33). The hard feelings were likely mutual. On the exact nature of the problem, another author writes: “Paul has no quarrel with those who continue to observe the law so long as they do not seek to compel others to live like them! Gentiles must not regard observance of the Jewish law as incompatible with Christian faith, and Jews must not regard it as essential to the Christian faith” (W. S. Campbell, “The Rule of Faith in Romans 12:1-15:13,” in *Pauline Theology*, 283, italics added).

In a nutshell, Gentiles, whose faith Paul calls “strong,” were exercising the liberty to eat anything, including meat prohibited by the law, while Jews, whose faith Paul calls “weak,” were not—choosing to eat only vegetables (Ro 14:1-4). Why vegetables only? While the law allowed some meats, meat sold in public meat markets would likely not have been slaughtered according to Jewish rules; it would likely contain some blood. What’s more, most of the meat would come from pagan temples. Jews who didn’t want to risk violating mosaic dietary laws simply had to abstain from meat. Overall, the meat-eaters looked down on the abstainers for their foreign scruples, and the abstainers condemned the meat-eaters for defiling themselves and offending Jews in the process.

In 15:7-9a, the apostle exhorts both groups to “accept one another,” that is, recognize each other’s place in the family of God and not let their different lifestyle convictions undermine the unity of Christ’s body. One commentator puts it this way: “‘Welcome one another’ (RSV); take your fellow-Christians to your hearts as well as to your homes” (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, TNTC, 256) — the point being that Christians should be able to embrace a measure of diversity in the church without withholding fellowship over disagreements regarding nonessentials. (Their conflicting convictions severely

limited their practice of hospitality — how could Gentiles invite Jews to dinner, and if they did, how could Jews accept their invitation!) They are to this, Paul argues, “just as,” that is, “in the same way” that Christ has accepted them both, or perhaps “because” Christ has done so, explaining that Christ has become a servant of the Jews “on behalf of God’s truth,” that is, “to show God’s truthfulness” (ESV). As a result of his service, the promises God made to the patriarchs have been confirmed, and the Gentiles now glorify God for his mercy. As one commentator puts it: “Christ has welcomed Gentile Christians by being a servant to Jews, in order to fulfill promises made to Jewish patriarchs about Gentiles!” (Ben Witherington III, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 343).

Paul’s argument, expressed in verses 8-9a is buttressed by citations from the Old Testament in verses 9b-12. The mention of “Gentiles” in all these texts indicates that their inclusion with Jews in God’s plan of salvation was no afterthought on God’s part. On these citations, another commentator writes: “There is an element of progression in the marshaling of quotations from the OT. The first (from Ps 18:49) pictures David as rejoicing in God for his triumphs in the midst of the nations that have become subject to him. In the second (from Deut 32:43), the position of the Gentiles is elevated to participation with Israel in the praise of the Lord (according to LXX). In the third and fourth quotations, the Gentiles, no longer pictured in relation to Israel, are seen in their own right, whether as praising the Lord (Ps 117:1) or as hoping in him whom God has raised up to rule over the nations (Isa 11:10)” (Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, 153).

Verse 13 contains a prayer-wish. Rather than see the believers in Rome divided over their differences, rather than see them at odds with one another over divisive lifestyle choices, Paul wants to see them enjoying fellowship with one another and experiencing wholesome relationships with one another. He prays for this “so that” his readers “may overflow with hope by the powers of the Holy Spirit.” The union of Jew and Gentile in Christ does not mark the end of God’s plan. But what he has accomplished according to his plan should inspire hope given what remains in store for those who believe.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 7 *accept*

“As in 14:1, ‘receive’ [cf. NET] means more than ‘tolerate’ or ‘give official recognition to’; Paul wants the Roman Christians to accept one another as fellow members of a family, with all the love and concern that should typify brothers and sisters” (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 874). “Paul may have especially, though by no means exclusively, in mind the practice of unreserved fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers” (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Romans*, TNTC, 256)—implying they were to be welcome in each other’s homes.

v. 7 *just as*

“The conjunction that Paul uses to introduce this theological reminder, *kathōs*, usually indicates a *comparison*; and were we to adopt this meaning here, Paul would be teaching that believers should accept one another *in the same manner* as Christ has accepted us. But *kathōs* here probably has its more rare *causal* sense. Paul would then be insisting that Christians treat one another as the fellow members of the family of God that they all truly are” (Moo, 875, italics added).

v. 7 *to bring praise . . .*

“It is not clear whether this final phrase relates grammatically to the command to receive one another or to the fact that Christ has received them. As far as the sense of the passage is concerned, it could apply to both” (Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, 153). “Perhaps, since the former is the leading idea, and since Paul has already drawn a connection between unity and the glorifying of God (v. 6), we should attach the phrase to the initial imperative, ‘receive one another’” (Moo, 875).

v. 8 *the Jews*

Cf. “to the circumcision” (ESV); “of the circumcised” (NET). “Christ became (and—as the perfect tense shows—remains) a servant of the Jews, who, especially when described as the ‘circumcision’, may be regarded as the most awkward and irritating of scrupulous persons. He thus provides an example for all strong Christians (cf. v. 3)” (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, HNTC, 271).

v. 8 *on behalf of God’s truth*

Cf. “For the vindication of God’s truth” (Barrett, 271). “In the sense of God’s fidelity to his word, more specifically his promises made to the patriarchs (cf. 9:4, 5)” (Harrison, 153). “That is, ‘to maintain the truth of

God by making good his promises to the patriarchs’ (NEB)” (Bruce, 257). “He [Christ] not only accepted Jewish believers but came to serve the Jewish people, as the Old Testament predicted, fulfilling God’s ‘promises’ to the patriarchs (Mark 10:45; Matt. 15:24; cf. Gal. 3:16). Consequently, the typically stronger Gentile believers should not despise their occasionally weaker Jewish brethren” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Romans,” 2024 ed., 303, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/romans.pdf).

v. 8 *so that*

V. 8b and 9a are two parallel expressions of *purpose* dependent on v. 8a. “For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth so that [1] the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed and [2] moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.” “Thus Paul implicitly reminds the ‘weak,’ mainly Jewish Christians, that the ‘strong,’ mainly Gentile Christians, are full members of the people of God” (Moo, 876).

v. 13 *joy and peace*

“The true content and goal of faith is not the right to eat and drink, but joy and peace in the Holy Spirit (cf. xiv. 17)” (Barrett, 272).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Celebrate diversity in the body of Christ by accepting one another
because Christ has accepted you to bring praise to God.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

My parents owned a pretty nice restaurant while I was growing up. Whether it was a first date, birthday or anniversary, Cecil's on the Creek was the place to go. At a ridiculously young age, I learned how to be a hostess with the mostest, take reservations with a smile or look guests in the eye and find the best seat in the house for their special evening. After I graduated from high school, I had the privilege of working front desk at one of the nicest hotels in Fort Worth. From rock stars to CEOs to newlyweds, I was the person to welcome them into a space guaranteeing a one-of-a-kind experience. It feels like my whole life was centered around welcoming others and inviting them into something special. Now I see that God was preparing me to learn the true meaning of hospitality and welcoming others into something beyond special, something that steps into the magnificent; God was training me to welcome others into His Kingdom. While a person may have a friendly disposition, hospitality—welcoming guests, anticipating needs, going above and beyond to make a person feel special, and setting our own desires aside for the sake of others—is largely a learned behavior. How are you modeling hospitality in your home? Are you invitational? When preparing to entertain, are you running around like crazy yelling at the kids to clean up? (Me, too!) This week, practice personal hospitality by extending an invitation to your home. Help your kids see this as a privilege that honors God. Help train them to be hospitable at home and for the sake of the kingdom.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Romans 15:7-13.

1. Who gets the praise when Christians accept others?
2. Why was Christ a servant of the Jews?
3. Who will glorify God for His mercy?

What Do You Think?

What is the difference between a Jew and a Gentile?

What Do You Do?

Make an invitation and invite a friend to come for a meal at your house. Work with your family to plan the meal and decorate so that your guest feels special.

CORE COMPETENCY: Love

I love and forgive others no matter what.

MEMORY VERSE: Micah 6:8

*"He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.