

**The Book Of Romans**  
**True Spiritual Leadership 2**  
**Session 7**

*Romans 1:8-15 (NASB)*

<sup>8</sup> *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.*

<sup>9</sup> *For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,*

<sup>10</sup> *always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.*

<sup>11</sup> *For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;*

<sup>12</sup> *that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.*

<sup>13</sup> *I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.*

<sup>14</sup> *I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.*

<sup>15</sup> *So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.*

Last time we studied we talked about how many serve from many motives, and many of the motives are simply external, and no matter how orthodox or helpful to other people the service might be, unless it is done out of a sincere desire to please and glorify God, it is not spiritual nor acceptable to Him.

In verses 8-16, Paul's words suggest ten marks of true spiritual service:

A thankful spirit (v8),

A concerned spirit (v9),

A willing and submissive spirit (v10b),

A loving spirit (v11),

A humble spirit (v12),

A fruitful spirit (v13),

An obedient spirit (v14),

An eager spirit (v15),

And the 10<sup>th</sup>, a bold spirit mentioned in v16a.

**A THANKFUL SPIRIT**

*Romans 1:8-15 (NASB)*

<sup>8</sup> *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.*

The first mark of true spiritual service, which Paul had in abundance, is thankfulness.

He was grateful for what God had done for and through him, but he was equally grateful for what God had done in and through other believers.

He perhaps did not thank the Roman believers themselves, let it be considered flattery.

He said, rather, **I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you.**

Paul's thankfulness was intimate, first of all because of his spiritual closeness to God

He said, **I thank my God.**

No pagan would have made such a statement, nor would have most Jews referred to God with a personal pronoun.

For Paul God was not a theological abstraction but a beloved Savior and close friend.  
As he testifies in the following verse

He served **God** in his spirit, from the depth of his heart and mind.  
Paul gives thanks **through Jesus Christ**, the one eternal Mediator between God and man.

We know the verse;

**John 14:6b (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup> *no one comes to the Father but through Me.*

Believers in Christ have the privilege of calling Almighty God, **my God**.

**1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*

It is because we have access to the Father **through Jesus Christ** that we always can;

**Hebrews 4:16a (NASB)**

<sup>16</sup> *draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

And that we can say;

**Romans 8:15c (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> *"Abba! Father!"*

Paul's thankfulness was also intimate because of his spiritual intimacy with fellow believers, even to such as those in Rom, most of whom he did not personally know.

*"I thank my God...for you all*, that is, for all the believers in the church at Rome.

His gratitude was impartial and all encompassing, making no distinctions.

In every epistle but one, Paul expresses gratitude for those to whom he writes.

The exception was the letter to the church in Galatia, which had defected from the true gospel of grace to a works system of righteousness and was worshiping and serving in the flesh because of the influence of the Judaizers.

It's not that the other churches were perfect, which is apparent since Paul wrote most of his letters to correct wrong doctrine or unholy living.

But even where the need for instruction and correction were great, he found something in those churches for which he could be thankful.

So a spirit of thankfulness is a mark of true spiritual leadership

#### A CONCERNED SPIRIT

**Romans 1:9-10A (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> *For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,*

<sup>10</sup> *always in my prayers*

The second mark of true spiritual leadership, and one that Paul demonstrated in his life, is that of a concerned spirit. Although he was grateful for what had been and was being done in the Lord's work, he was also deeply concerned about balancing those off with what yet needed to be done.

It is in these verses that Paul presents us with a key phrase, **"God, whom I serve in my spirit."** The word serve (*Latreuo to serve*) is always used in the New Testament of religious service, and is therefore sometimes translated *"worship"*

The greatest worship a believer can offer to God is devoted, pure, heart-felt ministry.

Paul's primary service to God was **the preaching of the gospel of His Son**, the ministry to which the Lord had called him and to which he gave every breath of his life.

But as he goes on to explain, that service to God included deep, personal concern for *everyone* who believed the **gospel**, whether they heard it from him or from someone else.

He was not concerned for the saints in Rome because they were his converts, which they were not, but because he and they were brothers who had the same spiritual Father through trusting in the same divine **Son** as their Savior. His intense concern for them was remarkable and touching.

Although Paul does not state the particular petitions he made on behalf of the Roman Christians, we can safely assume they were similar to those he mentions in other letters. And what did he pray for there?

#### ***Ephesians 3:14-19 (NASB)***

***<sup>14</sup> For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,***

***<sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,***

***<sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,***

***<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,***

***<sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,***

***<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.***

Now that is praying in depth!! And that is how we should pray for each other.

The content of all Paul's prayers were spiritual. He prayed for individual believers, but he also offered many prayers for groups of believers.

He prayed that their hearts would be knit with the heart of God, that their knowledge of His Word would be made complete and that their obedience to His will would be made perfect.

Listen the intensity of prayer measures the depth and intensity of concern.

#### **A WILLING AND SUBMISSIVE SPIRIT**

#### ***Romans 1:10b (NASB)***

***<sup>10</sup> making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.***

Paul not only prayed for the spiritual well-being of the Romans church but was eager to be used by God as an instrument to help answer that prayer according to His divine will.

The church has always been full of people who are quick to criticize, but seems short of those who are willing to be used by God to solve the problems they are concerned about.

Many Christians are much more willing to give money to an outreach ministry than they are to witness themselves.

In his book *The Gospel Blimp* (Elgin, Ill: David C. Cook, 1983), Joe Bayly tells the imagined story of a man who hired a blimp to bombard his neighborhood with gospel tracts. The point of the book, and the popular movie made from it, was that some believers will go to great extremes to avoid personally confronting others with the gospel.

A man once came to a pastor after a morning service and suggested that he church provide \$25,000 to create a sophisticated telephone answering service that would give a gospel message to callers. Like the man in *the Gospel Blimp* story, this man wanted to use his scheme primarily to reach an unbelieving neighbor.

The pastor suggested to him that he should just go over there and tell him the gospel himself.

It is much easier, and therefore more attractive to the flesh to pray for others to be used by the Lord than to pray that He use us.

But like Isaiah, when Paul heard the Lord's call for service or saw a spiritual need, he said, "**Here am I. Send me**" (*Isa. 6:8*)

There is a time and place for praying for other sin the Lord's service. But the true measure of our concern for His work is our willingness for Him to use us.

Paul's eagerness to serve God was always directed **by the will of God**. He did not serve in the direction of his own desires and insight but according the **will** of the One he served.

When Agabus dramatically predicted the danger that awaited Paul in Jerusalem, the apostles friends begged him not to go. But Paul answered:

**Acts 21:13-14 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> *Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*

<sup>14</sup> *And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"*

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse designed an analogy to illustrate the relationship of a believers prayers to God's sovereignty.

*"We will suppose the case of a man who loves violin music. He has the means to buy for himself a very fine violin, and he also purchases the very best radio obtainable. He builds up a library of the great musical scores, so that he is able to take any piece that is announced on the radio, put it on his music stand, and play along with the orchestra.*

*The announcer says that Mr. Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra are going to play Beethoven's seventh symphony. The man in his home puts that symphony on his stand and tunes his violin with what he hears coming from the orchestra.*

*The music that comes from the radio we might call foreordained. Ormandy is going to follow the score just as Beethoven wrote it. The man in his living room starts to scratch away at the first violin part.*

*He misses beats, he loses his place and find it again. He breaks a string, and stops to fix it. The music goes on and on.*

*He finds his place again and plays on after his fashion to the end of the symphony. The announcer names the next work that is to be played and the fiddler puts that number on his rack.*

*Day after week after month after year, he finds pleasure in scraping his fiddle along with the violins of the great orchestras. Their music is determined in advance.*

*What he must do is learn to play in their tempo, in their key, and to follow the score as it has been written in advance.*

*If he decides that he wants to play Yankee Doodle when the orchestra is in the midst of a Brahm's number, there's going to be dissonance and discord in the man's house, but not in the Academy of Music.*

*After some years of this the man may be a rather creditable violin player and may have learned to submit himself utterly to the scores that are written and follow the program as played. Harmony and joy come from the submission and cooperation.*

*So it is with the plan of God. It is rolling toward us, unfolding day by day, as He has planned it before the foundation of the world.*

*There are those who fight against it and who must ultimately be cast into outer darkness because He will not have in His heavens those who proudly resist Him. This cannot be tolerated any more than the authorities would permit a man to bring his own violin into the Academy of Music and start to play Shostakovich when the program called for Bach.*

*The score of God's plan is set forth in the Bible. In the measure that I learn it, submit myself to it, and seek to live it in accordance with all that is therein set forth, I shall find myself in joy and in harmony with God and His plans. If I set myself to fight against it, or disagree with that which comes forth, there can be no peace in my heart and life. If in my heart I seek to play a tune that is not the melody the Lord has for me, there can be nothing but dissonance.*

*Prayer is learning to play the tune that the eternal plan of God calls for and to do that which is in harmony with the will of the Eternal Composer and the Author of all that is true harmony in life and living" (Man's Ruin: Romans 1:1-32[Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952],pp. 122-23. Used by permission)*

The popular practice of demanding things from God and expecting Him to meet those demands is perverted and heretical, an attempt to sway God's perfect and holy will to one's own imperfect and sinful will.

Paul sought the advancement of God's kingdom and glory through God's won will, not his own.

Self-styled messiahs are always megalomaniacs. They have grandiose schemes for winning the world for Christ. They always think big, and their plans seldom show evidence of being limited by God's plans, which from a human perspective sometimes seem small and insignificant.

Jesus ministry did not focus on converting the great leaders of His day or evangelizing the great cities. He chose twelve ordinary men to train as His apostles, and most of His teaching took place in insignificant, often isolated, parts of Palestine.

He did not raise large sums of money or attempt to use the influence of great men to His advantage. His sole purpose was to do His Father's will in His Father's way and in His Father's time. That is the highest goal for us, as well

#### A LOVING SPIRIT

**Romans 1:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> *For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;*

Another mark of spiritual service is a loving spirit.

Paul wanted to visit the Roman believers in order to serve them lovingly in God's name.

He did not want to go as a tourist to see the famous Appian Way or the Forum or the Coliseum or the chariot races. He wanted to go to Rome to give of himself, not to entertain or indulge himself.

The Christian who looks on his service to the Lord as a means of receiving appreciation and personal satisfaction is inevitably subject to disappointment and self-pity.

But the one who focuses on giving never has such problems.

Paul's ministry goal was to;

**Colossians 1:28-29 (NASB)**

<sup>28</sup> *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.*

<sup>29</sup> *For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*

The Apostles loving Spirit is reflected beautifully in his first letter to Thessalonica.

**1 Thessalonians 2:7-9 (NASB)**

<sup>7</sup> *But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.*

<sup>8</sup> *Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.*

<sup>9</sup> *For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*

The foremost characteristic of genuine love is selfless giving, and it was out of such love that Paul assured the church in Corinth,

**2 Corinthians 12:15a (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> *I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls.*

Willingness to spend was willingness to use all his resources and energy on their behalf, and willingness to be spent was willingness to die for them if necessary.

Paul was burdened for the physical welfare of the Roman believers but his overriding concern was for their spiritual well-being, and therefore his principal purpose for longing **to see** them was **that he might impart to them some spiritual gift.**

Paul wanted to impart the spiritual blessings in order for the Roman believers to **be established.**

He wanted those spiritual brothers and sisters;

**Ephesians 4:15b (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> *to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*

A young woman once told her pastor that she had been teaching a Sunday School class of young girls for some while and thought that she loved them dearly. But one Saturday afternoon at her college football game the Lord convicted her about the superficiality of her love for them. Because of her busy Saturdays, she seldom spent more than a few minutes preparing her lesson for the next day. From that day on she determined to make whatever sacrifice and give whatever time necessary to give those girls something of eternal significance. That was the kind of committed, self-sacrificing love Paul had for the church at Rome.