

A PICTURE OF *THE FULL LIFE*

LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

Living the full life is how Jesus intends for us to live. Paul gives us a picture of the full life in the remainder of Romans 15, and we need to pattern our life after what that picture looks like.

RECIPIENT OF GOD'S GRACE (ROMANS 15:14-15)

Paul encouraged the Christians in Rome and emphasized that whatever he has become and has done were all by the grace of God. He was merely a recipient of God's grace. Our story is also a story of God's grace. In 1 Timothy 1:13-14, he reviews how he used to be: a "blasphemer" (reverses spiritual truth), "persecutor" (one who hunts down), and "violent aggressor" (finds pleasure in hurting). That is why he says that he is the worst of sinners, but he found hope (1 Timothy 1:15-16). If there was hope for Paul, there is hope for you. God can change anybody. No one is out of reach of the grace of God.

MINISTER OF GOD'S GOSPEL (ROMANS 15:16)

A "minister" is a servant who works for the benefit of the community while a "priest" is one who performs a sacred rite. The Bible says we are priests — sharing the gospel is our sacred rite or duty! When we pray or intercede for people who don't know Jesus, we are representing them before God. When we pray with them, care for them, and share our testimony or gospel with them, we are representing God to the people. Jesus is God but He came to earth and took on the appearance of man. When He suffered and died for us, He was disfigured. He became a bondservant, obedient to a gruesome, painful death. This is why we are ministers of God's gospel: the only thing we can boast about is Jesus and His gospel (1 Peter 2:9).

INSTRUMENT OF GOD'S POWER (ROMANS 15:17-21)

Even though the Jews rejected the Messiah, it became a wide-open door for the gospel to reach the Gentiles. Paul really wanted to take the gospel where it has

never been before because it was Jesus' marching order for him. He knew he couldn't have done those things without the Holy Spirit. For us today, this is the Spirit-filled life: we operate moment by moment by the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) because this is what the Holy Spirit does in our life (Galatians 5:22-23). We are meant to live the full life as instruments of God's power. God specializes in using ordinary people to do extraordinary things (Chip Ingram).

SERVANT OF GOD'S PEOPLE (ROMANS 15:22-28)

Paul lived a life opposite to God's grace — but from a religious, arrogant, zealous person persecuting Christians, he became a servant going to many parts of the world, serving God and people even if it cost him his very life. In Romans 16, we see other examples of people who lived a full life serving the Lord, such as Priscilla and Aquila who were Paul's fellow workers in a house fellowship. If it were not for them, Paul would have died prematurely, and the work of the gospel would have been derailed.

A WARNING (ROMANS 16:17-19)

In Romans 16:17-18, Paul inserts a warning about things that can shatter this picture of a full life: he says to turn away from "dissensions" (separating people from pointless factions) and "hindrances" (bait for a trap; draws one to sin). Be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil (Romans 16:19). All these things come against the church of Jesus whether from the inside or from the outside, but Paul declares that the God of peace will soon crush Satan as a fulfillment of the prophecy in Genesis 3.

Romans 16:25-27 is a picture of the full life and ends in a doxology — to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is your personal story of how you gave your life to Jesus?

What will you do to share the gospel more regularly?

How will you practice the Spirit-filled life?

How can you best serve God and His people at this time?

LAST WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

ROMANS 16:27

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SAVE THE DATES

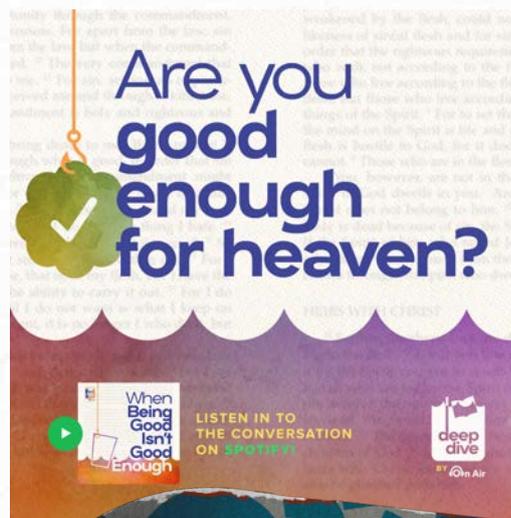
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LOOKING FOR ANSWERS? THINK YOUR VISIT IS A COINCIDENCE? YOUR BEING HERE TODAY IS NO ACCIDENT!

God brought you here for His purpose.

1 God loves you.

He desires for you to have a meaningful life with Him in the present and gain eternal life with Him in the future.

*Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who **keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness** to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments —Deuteronomy 7:9*

2 God is holy.

We are sinful, and our sin separates us from Him.

Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. — Romans 3:23

3 God is merciful.

In His love, He made the only way for us to be reconciled to Him: through His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins and be raised to life for eternity.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. — Romans 5:8

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. — John 14:6

4 God is gracious.

By placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven of our sins and saved from eternal death.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. — John 3:16

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

5 God keeps His promises.

You can be sure that you have eternal life when you trust in Jesus.

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:11-13