

Dear Ladies,

First off I owe you each an apology. This last week contained probably some of the most mind-boggling questions thus far and I left you high and dry. I promise I didn't have a bit of fun. I'd have much rather been struggling over the lesson alongside you than staying overtime at work. But that's all done. I trust that God gave you just what each of you needed most to hear.

As I was preparing to wrap up this lesson I remembered something I once heard about a question posed to children. Each was asked what one thing they'd like to see God do. One little girl said she'd like God to make bad people good, and good people nice. How profound. And how close to the lesson in Romans 15.

This lesson and the last spoke much about how to bear the failings of people who don't eat, think and worship like we do. In doing so we are encouraged to honor God in the way we gently bring others alongside us. We're to accept fellow believers, no matter where they are on their walk and to do so without judgment. In other words good people, be nice.

As we finish this chapter how sweet to see that Paul asks the believers in Rome to bathe him in prayer. This should be our own requests as we go about doing God's work. Paul understood that he was in the midst of a struggle, and knew he would never do God's work well without the prayers of God's people. Let this be our lesson too. You may not think you're doing God's work, but I promise that every one of you is on your own mission field. For some your mission field is pretty small-3 bedrooms, 1 bath, a few small children - for others God has bigger things planned. No matter what, we're asked to be God's hands, feet and heart, in whatever work He has for us to do. Serve well ladies.

Love, as always, Renee

So on the next week's lesson

Read Romans 16

1. List each of the women Paul mentions. (You may need to guess with a few of the names)
2. What does this tell you about how God views women?
3. What do we learn about Phoebe's role and what might that suggest about women in ministry based on these verses?
4. Paul gives a long list of people to be greeted. What can we infer about Paul's ability to form friendships?

5. What lesson is there for us related to building and maintaining relationships?

6. How are you caring for your Christian friendships?

7. What warning are we given in vs 17-18?

8. Can you think of ways that Satan tries to desensitize us? How can we avoid being deceived?

9. What responsibility are believers given in vs 25-27?

10 What did you find especially meaningful through this study in Romans?

For personal growth

Romans takes us on a remarkable journey from sin to salvation, from the grip of the law to the freedom from the law and from understanding God's sovereignty to allowing Him to use us as part of His sovereign plan. Where is God calling you now and what will your service to Him look like? What do your relationships look like? How do you relate to God, yourself, others, the church and the government? Do you care about pleasing God? Where does that fall on your to do list? Will you remain teachable as we further our study in God's word this year?

For the good of the group:

How do you think this study has changed your thinking?