

(14) I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. But on some points, I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the Gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

(17) In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience --- by word and deed, by the powers of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God -- so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the Gospel of Christ; and thus I make it my ambition to preach the Gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written,

“Those who have never been told of Him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.” (Isaiah 52:15)

(22) This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you. But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and there to be helped on my journey to you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.

(25) At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and, indeed, they owe it to them! For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. When, therefore, I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you. I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessings of Christ.

(30) I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's Will I may be refreshed in your company. May the God of peace be with you all. Amen!

Think on these things:

- 1) Though he says he has written boldly to the church at Rome (v.15), what characteristics in v.14 are cited that indicate he sees this church as solid and mature?

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- 2) What does Paul say is his particular Christian calling in life? What is his goal (v.16)?

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- 3) V.18 offers insight into what Christian testimonies ought to be. What is that nugget of truth?

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4) What was Paul's ambition as a missionary (v.20)? See also 1 Corinthians 3:4-10.

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5) What do you think of Paul's statement in v.22, that God "prevented" him from coming to Rome? Have you ever felt that God held you back from doing something at a certain time? Explain.

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6) How did Paul explain that stopping in Rome would be mutually beneficial (v.24, 29)?

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7) Vs. 25-27 and 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 (especially 11-14) are part of a key principle of scripture: we who benefit from the ministry of our church leaders have an obligation to support them with our money (through tithing) --- a "material" obligation for a "spiritual" benefit. Can you think of other uses of tithes in the church?

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8) Not identified in this passage, do you know historically why things were so bad financially in Jerusalem at this time, why they needed help? (See Acts 11:27-30)

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9) What personal concern does Paul ask the Church in Rome to pray for (vs.30-31)? Did God answer Paul's prayer the way he wanted? Skim Acts 21:27-22:29.

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10) Did Paul ever make it to Rome (see Acts 28:11-16, 30-31)? Did he go on to Spain as he hoped?

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People and situations I want to pray for this week: