

**"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan****ROMANS 15****Romans 15**

The Old Testament and the New Testament can be summed up no better than Jesus did in the Gospel of Matthew, where He said, **"Teacher, which commandment is the greatest in the Law?" Jesus declared, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."** (Matthew 22:36-40) The last sentence tells the story. God desires us to love Him, and it is commanded. The second greatest thing we can do is love those made in His image, which is all mankind, good, bad, and ugly.

This great commandment is what is behind Paul's instruction to the Romans. **"We who are strong ought to bear with the shortcomings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written: "The insults of those who insult You have fallen on Me."** (Romans 15:1-3) Followers of Jesus are to be the example to the rest of creation concerning how we care for those around us, especially the weak. In the context of chapter fourteen, Paul relates this specifically to those who come into our assemblies who have weaknesses and "hang-ups" and need help with their daily lives. People will come into our assemblies who come from

various backgrounds and family situations where alcohol and drug abuse took place, and some might truly have difficulty with wine being used for anything. Is there anything Biblically wrong with wine? No. Can it be a stumbling block to those who, for some reason, have had bad experiences or who have come out of backgrounds that teach wine is of the devil and not one drop should be taken for any reason or only for "medicinal purposes?" Yes. So, everyone should be concerned about offending someone who may be working through "stuff" in their lives and not just say, "Get over it!" They may be trying to grow and mature, and they need the fellowship of those who are more mature and can help them along the way. Especially during the permissive, arrogant, self-loving, independent spirit that permeates the church of Jesus today. We must guard our hearts so that we do not hurt those among us who are struggling with such issues.

These commentaries are so brief, but please read Romans 15:4 one more time. The verse is important to those of us who have lived since the New Testament era in order to remember that the Old Testament is not a closed book. Most of the prophecies concerning Messiah (Jesus) have not been fulfilled, and all of the Old Testament was written to teach us who God is and how He works and relates to us today! Read it again.

**Prayer and Action Steps**

*Father, thank You for giving us the fellowship of believers, the church. May our hearts be in bearing the weaknesses of those who come our way, remembering that each of us needs the help and encouragement of the body, no matter where we are in our journey, and walk with You. Amen*