

Power to Please

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Romans 15:1-13.
- B. Subject: how to live with other Christians who disagree with you.
- C. Divisions arise from different views and backgrounds.

II. How to preserve harmony despite difference in viewpoint.

- A. The problem is those legalistic Christians deploring others' freedom.
- B. The strong (those with liberty) are to bear with the weak trying to please them to their own good.

- 1. They need encouragement and not criticism.
- 2. They need attention and not neglect.

C. Christianity moves contrary to the world living to please its neighbor.

- 1. This is upsetting to people—showing liberty and an attitude of wanting to please others.
- 2. Three ways one goes about trying to please himself.
 - a. Outright egotism.
 - b. The reciprocating egoist.
 - c. The deceived egoist.
- 3. The Christian response is a radical thing—a Christian is so anxious to please God that he is no longer concerned about himself.
 - a. This is illustrated by the life of Christ.
 - b. To gain one's life, one must lose it.
 - c. This is illustrated by many Old Testament characters—Moses, Abraham, Joseph.

D. The end of human life is to glorify Jesus Christ.

- 1. The key is to do things in accordance with Christ Jesus.

2. Jesus is the life in which we are to appropriate.
3. The teachings to act rest on God's work in Romans 5-8.
4. The secret of living with people is a thankful heart toward God and an obedient will.

III. How to preserve harmony despite difficulties in background.

- A. The Jews and Gentiles came from very different backgrounds.
- B. All racial and class distinctions are to make no difference among Christians because God has received all men.

IV. The result of Christian harmony is abounding in hope.

- A. Hope is not natural in disagreement.
- B. This requires power from the Holy Spirit through believing.

Application questions:

1. Which type of egoist do you find yourself fitting into the most? How does this manifest itself?

2. How have you seen Christians responding inappropriately to weaker brothers? What should have been the right response?

3. How is reflecting upon God's acceptance of all men a compelling reason to accept those different from us?
