

“How’s Business?” (Romans 16:1–27)

You can learn a lot about people by what they tell you about their job. When I am first getting to know someone, I like to ask them about their work. This helps me measure their levels of stress, satisfaction, and overall health. This can be particularly enlightening when I’m talking with a small business owner. When I ask small business owners questions about their business, it can be nearly impossible to shut them up. Even the introverted small business owner can ramble on for hours on the state of their business. Why is this so? Small business owners have great quantities of time, money, and energy invested in their work. This results in them caring a great deal about their business. So when I talk with such people, I will often ask the question, “How’s business?”

I’d like to ask you that same question, “How’s business?” This question is posed with a twist though. I’m not referring to how you make a living; I’m asking about how you make a life. Whether you know it or not, you’re responsible to conduct business. In fact, you are called to be a businessman or a businesswoman. But your business may not be what you think it is. You’ve heard it said, “It’s none of your business!” Well, in Rom 16, we see: *God’s work IS your business*. Paul states that you are to be about the people business, the protection business, and the praise business.

1. We are in the people business (16:1–16, 21–23). Effective ministry begins and ends with people. This section rattles off a list of twenty-eight individuals that have directly or indirectly impacted Paul. The apostle begins with a commendation in 16:1–2¹: **“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant [or “deacon”²] of the church which is at Cenchrea;³ that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.”** Paul commends⁴ Phoebe who is most likely a deaconess.⁵ He requests that the church receive her with hospitality (and potential financial support) for she has been a “helper” (*prostatis*). This term likely means that Phoebe was a patron who gave generously to God’s work.⁶ According to tradition, she also carried Paul’s letter to Rome. Paul, therefore, wants Phoebe esteemed and treated well.

In 16:3–16 Paul moves from a commendation to a formal series of greetings: **“Greet⁷ Prisca [Priscilla] and Aquila,⁸ my fellow workers⁹ in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks,¹⁰ to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus,¹¹ my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junias [Junia],¹² my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles,¹³ who also were in Christ before me. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphaena¹⁴ and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus,¹⁵ a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.”**

Let me introduce you to the rest of the names in 16:21–23. (We’ll skip a paragraph for a moment.) These are some of Paul’s best friends who are in Corinth sending their greetings with Paul’s letter: **“Timothy¹⁶ my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.”**

We have come to the end of what is the most important document ever written—the book of Romans. Yet, Paul concludes his magnificent letter by rattling off a laundry list of twenty-eight individuals,¹⁷ many who have names that are impossible to pronounce.¹⁸ Frankly, this seems like an odd way to end an epistle as high and lofty as Romans. Why does God bother to use precious space in His written revelation for greetings? There are at least four reasons:

- 1) ***To show us that God cares about individuals and knows them by name.*** God loves people deeply. As Tommy Walker sings, “He Knows My Name!”¹⁹ Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd of His sheep, whose “sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out” (John 10:3).²⁰ If Jesus cares so much about people, we should as well. This week why not memorize the names of ten people in your church family?
- 2) ***To demonstrate that God keeps records on His people, noting the areas in which they have given faithful service.*** Many of us have visited the Pearl Harbor memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, or the memorial for the 9/11 victims. We often honor people for their sacrifices by including them in earthly memorials. Well, God honors faithful people by including them in His Word, which will never pass away (Matt 5:18). Last January (2010), ESPN television ran a compelling feature about Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, who had just been named the NFL’s Most Valuable Player. But the feature was not about football. Instead, it explained that for several years, when certain competitors Manning admired were retiring from the NFL, he took time to handwrite a note to them, congratulating them on their careers and their character. Each recipient who was interviewed expressed deep appreciation that one of the greatest players of all time would do that. It was a great reminder of the power of the written word. While a written note from Peyton Manning has much value, no human words can compare with God’s written Word.²¹
- 3) ***To show us that people of all backgrounds, race, social status, and education are of equal importance to God and to His church.***²² In this list of people Paul includes singles, married couples, widows, and widowers. He greets men and women, slaves²³ and social elites, new Christians and mature believers, Greeks, Romans, and Jews.²⁴ He has met some in prisons, many and synagogues, several in marketplaces, and a few in churches.²⁵ This list depicts God’s diverse heart for His church. It depicts a taste of heaven!
- 4) ***To highlight the importance of family affection.*** Paul urges the believers to “greet²⁶ one another with a holy kiss” (16:16). This command is mentioned four times in his letters.²⁷ However, it was not the cultural custom of the Greeks or Romans to be physically affectionate. Instead, a Roman greeting would be to clasp forearms with a stranger or friend. This is a modification of the ancient custom of handshaking, which began when a person would extend the hand to show that he was not holding a dagger. Basically, then, the handshake was a sign to declare, “I’m not going to slit your throat!”²⁸ Paul’s implied expectation seems to be that believers should be more affection with one another than with those outside God’s family. Hence, most of us need to go beyond a mere handshake. I suggest a warm handclasp or an appropriate hug. By appropriate, I mean non-pressing and non-lingering hugs. In other words, get in and get out! We don’t want people walking into church and requesting the non-hugging or non-kissing section. When in doubt of what is appropriate, ask the other person’s permission (e.g., “Would it be okay if I gave you a hug?”). Most people appreciate warm expressions of affection because God’s people need love. Moreover, we must always remember that on any given Sunday there are people in our midst who are devastated by life’s trials. We need to show them Christ’s love.

There are several other interesting tidbits that are worthy of consideration:

- 1) ***Women are mentioned prominently.***²⁹ More than one-third of those who are mentioned are women.³⁰ It's especially interesting that the four people (Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis) described as "working hard" (*kopiao*, "laboring to the point of weariness")³¹ are women. That should come as no surprise to those of us who serve in the church. Women are typically the most faithful servants; yet, in many conservative churches we often relegate them to baking cookies and working in the nursery. Yet, women are incredibly important. Women were the last to remain at the cross and the first to greet Christ at the tomb. Thus, on the issue of women in ministry, if I have to err, I would rather error on the side of grace and liberty. When I stand before Jesus Christ, I would rather have Him say, "Keith, you misunderstood my Word and gave women more freedom to serve and lead than I intended" versus, "Keith, I blessed you with many gifted women, but you squelched their ability to serve Me." I'll take the former rebuke over the latter. Regardless of your understanding of women in ministry, please honor and appreciate the women in your local church. It is likely that without them, your church would not be in existence.
- 2) ***There are several single-minded singles with a passion for Christ.*** In 16:14 Paul mentions Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them. These men all had Greek names and were probably businessmen living in Rome and sharing the same residence. Their living quarters were evidently also used as a house church, or at least for the purposes of a fellowship group. This reminds us that singles were a part of the early church and they were highly valued. Paul was a single and was convinced that being single was a good thing (1 Cor 7). A single can fully invest his or her life in the things of God. If you are single, I urge you to invest the years that you have in the things of God. Please strive to love God and serve Him with your whole heart.
- 3) ***There are courageous couples.*** Priscilla and Aquila (16:3–4) were willing to risk their necks for Paul. Andronicus and Junias served in prison with Paul (16:7). Both of these couples ministered together as dynamic duos (notice the emphasis on the word "fellow"). Their marriages were for the purpose of ministry. If you are married, is your marriage a ministry? What will you do to ensure that you and your spouse are focused on Christ and serving Him together? If you're single, I urge you not to get married unless your future spouse will be a complement to you spiritually. If he or she doesn't share your passion for Christ and your desire to serve Him, don't marry that person. Continue to wait on God.
- 4) ***There is one adoptive mother.*** Rufus' mother (16:13) served as a mother to the apostle Paul. You may be a widow or a woman who is unable to have children of your own, yet that doesn't mean that you can't be a mother. There are many children and even adults that need a mother's care. Please consider pouring your time, energy, and wisdom into the next generation of believers.
- 5) ***House churches are mentioned.*** These churches are mentioned at least once (16:5), probably three times (16:14–15), and possibly even five times (16:10–11).³² The early church was made up of many communities that loved one another. We must also develop this kind of community today. We must focus energy on raising up small groups that can be led and hosted in various homes throughout our community. We must exercise hospitality and invite other people into our homes for times of fellowship. This is what it means to prioritize people. *God's work IS your business.*

[We are to be in the people business and . . .]

2. We are in the protection business (16:17–20). Paul moves from the “holy kiss” to what seems to be the “kiss of death.” What in the world would cause Paul to shift gears like this? Some scholars conclude that these words must be a later addition written by someone other than Paul. However, since Paul has just talked about greeting one another with a holy kiss, and since the kiss was certainly a token of love, unity, and harmony, it is not surprising that Paul would want to warn us to watch out for those who would disrupt that love, unity and harmony. The bottom line is this: We shouldn’t be kissing everyone because not everyone deserves a holy kiss. When we practice true biblical discernment, there will be peace in our churches because the troublemakers will not rule the day.

In 16:17–20 Paul shares three duties that we can perform to help protect the church.³³

- 1) **Observation:** In 16:17 Paul writes, “**Now I urge³⁴ you, brethren, keep your eye³⁵ on those who cause dissensions and hindrances³⁶ contrary to the teaching which you learned.**” We are urged, challenged, and encouraged to watch and be on the alert for those who pollute the body of Christ.³⁷ The verb translated “keep your eye” is the term *skopeo* from which we get our English words *microscope* or *telescope*. Paul is exhorting every member of the congregation to continually scope out “dissensions and hindrances.”³⁸ Our eyes must be peeled at all times so that we can identify a dangerous false teacher. This does not mean we are to go around on heresy hunts. Certain Christians tend to be self-appointed, theological watchdogs who sniff at all the saints and bark in disappointment whenever they find one who doesn’t dot his i’s and cross his t’s as he should. This is not God’s desire.³⁹ Nevertheless, we must keep our eyes peeled.
- 2) **Confrontation:** This second duty is assumed by Paul and clearly expressed elsewhere (e.g., Titus 3:10). After observing those who cause dissensions and hindrances, it is critical to confront the offender. If the person repents you have won your brother or sister. But often erring members can be hardhearted. Nonetheless, you must not shrink back from your responsibility to confront.
- 3) **Separation:** In 16:17b–18 Paul writes that we are to “**turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites;⁴⁰ and by their smooth⁴¹ and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.**”⁴² We too must keep away from these types of false teachers.⁴³ We must be especially aware of their deceptive speech and not assume that we are incapable of being duped. We can all fall prey to false teaching. We must also be sensitive not to deemphasize doctrine. Doctrine divides, some say, so we ought not to give much concern to it, but instead focus on loving, peaceful relationships. These people forget that we do not know what a loving relationship looks like apart from how it is described by the truth of biblical doctrine. Paul does not say to avoid doctrine here; he says to avoid heretics.⁴⁴

Paul continues in 16:19–20: “**For the report of your obedience has reached to all;⁴⁵ therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.⁴⁶ The God of peace⁴⁷ will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.**”⁴⁸ God doesn’t want us to be naive about doctrine, but He does want us to be innocent about evil. Discord in the church is almost always the work of Satan, but if believers keep troublemakers and their teaching at a distance, God will give them the victory over Satan and all his works.⁴⁹ We must always remember the war is over. At the cross, Christ defeated Satan and the hordes of hell and then sealed the deal with His resurrection! The victory is complete, but Satan is working like he still has a fighting chance. We must battle him by being obedient to the Lord and waiting upon Him.⁵⁰ *God’s work IS your business.*

[Not only are we to be in the people business and the protection business, but also . . .]

3. We are in the praise business (16:25–27).⁵¹ In this triumphant conclusion, there are two broad categories of praise: praise for God’s work (16:25–26) and praise for God’s wisdom (16:27).⁵² Furthermore, in these three verses we find three of the major themes in the book of Romans.⁵³

- 1) ***Praise God for His work (16:25–26).*** In 16:25 Paul writes: **“Now to Him who is able [“powerful”⁵⁴] to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past.”** The verb “to establish” (*sterizo*) refers to a settled, stable spiritual condition—both doctrinally and experientially.⁵⁵ It includes not only a knowledge of the truth, but also a commitment to obey the truth. Our English word steroid comes from that word “establish.” It means to give you the maximum amount of strength available. God is saying: I am the source of emotional and spiritual steroids, and there are no side effects, and it’s perfectly legal. I want to give you strength and stability. If you are in the midst of a crisis or if you are feeling particularly weak, God wants to strengthen you. When your emotions, hormones, worries, fears, circumstances, and misunderstandings lead to instability, God will give you strength through His gospel.

Paul finishes his thought in 16:26: **“. . . but now [this gospel] is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known⁵⁶ to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith.”** This universal offer of the gospel was not understood as it should have been in Old Testament times. God put plenty of hints in the writings of the prophets about the fact that the gospel is for everyone who believes, but the Jews overlooked those hints and claimed salvation as their own personal possession. Now, Paul says the truth has been fully uncovered. This truth is for you! Though you are a sinner and have fallen short of God’s glory, He sent His one and only Son to die for you, to pay the eternal penalty for your sin. He only asks that you quit relying on any other means to establish a relationship with Him, trusting only Jesus’ sacrifice.

- 2) ***Praise God for His wisdom (16:27).*** Paul closes out his book with these words: **“to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.”** Our God is the “only wise God.” There is none but Him. He is incomprehensible. Hence, He alone deserves glory forever.⁵⁷

You have just finished the greatest theological letter ever penned, and it is only fitting that Paul concludes with praise. He does so throughout Romans. Paul is not some armchair theologian. He is a passionate worshiper of God who frequently burst into spontaneous praise. Theology should always lead to doxology (praise). Theology, the “study of God,” is not an intellectual pastime. Nor is it only for the good of the church. Its ultimate purpose is to enable God’s people to glorify Him more effectively and more passionately because they have learned more about Him.⁵⁸ The most important truth that you can take home from the book of Romans is this: God desires, deserves, and demands your worship. He wants you to give Him the glory that He’s due and that you would reflect His glory to others. *God’s work IS your business.*

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Scripture References

Romans 16:1–27

Romans 1:5, 16–17

Proverbs 6:16–19

1 Thessalonians 1:7–10

Matthew 7:15–20

1 Timothy 6:3–5

Galatians 5:13–26

Study Questions

1. Do I know individuals by name at church (Rom 16:1–16, 21–23)? Why or why not? What excuses or justifications have I made for my failure to know and recall peoples' names? Why is it important to use a person's name? How can I grow in this skill?
2. How can I commend those believers who serve with me or on my behalf such as pastors, elders, deacons, Sunday School teachers? Do I honor and appreciate "hard working" churchwomen (Rom 16:6–12)? Is it hard for me to express affection to other believers (16:16)? What can I do to grow in this area?
3. If I am single, how am I investing my time, energy, and gifts in the church (Rom 16:14)? If I am married, how are my spouse and I serving the Lord together? How many dear friends do I have in the Lord? Am I committed to a small group in my church (16:5, 10–11, 14–15)? Why or why not?
4. Do I know God's Word well enough to recognize false teachers (Rom 16:17)? Have I ever been deceived by a false teaching (16:18)? How was I turned back to the truth? What can I do to protect my church from doctrinal, philosophical, and ethical errors?
5. How has God strengthened me through the gospel (Rom 16:25)? Am I proclaiming and living the "obedience of faith" (16:26)? Does my life reflect God's glory (16:27)? How has God changed my life through this study of the book of Romans?

Notes

¹ Schreiner notes: “Letters of commendation were common in the ancient world since those traveling were often unknown and needed hospitality and support to carry on their business or ministry (cf. Acts 18:27; 2 Cor. 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 10:12; 12:11; 3 John 9–10; 1 Macc. 12:43; 2 Macc. 9:25).” Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 786.

² Phoebe is commended as “a servant of the church.” This use of “servant” (*diakonos*) can speak to the technical usage of “deacon” or the general usage of “servant.” Boa and Kruidenier may be correct when they state: “Whether Phoebe, and others like her, served in official or unofficial capacities cannot be determined from the evidence at hand.” Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*. Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2000), 469.

³ Cenchræa was Corinth’s eastern port. This provides sufficient evidence to think that Paul is writing from Corinth on his way to Jerusalem (Rom 15:25).

⁴ The verb *sunistemi* (“I commend”) means “to bring together as friends or in a trusting relationship by commending/recommending” (BDAG 2). Commendations of other people are embedded in Paul’s other letters.

⁵ Schreiner, *Romans*, 786 provides three reasons that Phoebe was likely a deaconess: “First, 1 Tim. 3:11 probably identifies women as deacons (see Schreiner 1991c: 213–14). Second, the designation ‘deacon of the church in Cenchræa’ suggests that Phoebe served in this special capacity, for this is the only occasion in which the term *diakonos* is linked with a particular local church. Third, the use of the masculine noun *diakonos* also suggests that the office is intended. Of course, we need to beware of reading into early church offices the full-fledged development that was realized later. But women deacons were probably appointed early, especially because other women needed assistance from those of their own sex in visitation, baptism, and other matters (cf. Pelagius [de Bruyn 1993: 151]).”

⁶ Some English versions think the term “helper” (*prostatis*), used only here in the NT, means simply that Phoebe has “helped” people (NASB; NIV; NLT), but the term often referred to a person of wealth who gave assistance to a group as a “patron” (similar to the way the women in Luke 8:1–3 “were helping to support” the apostolic band). In a sense this means she was a leader of the church there in a manner similar to Lydia at Philippi. Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*. The IVP NT Commentary series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 403.

⁷ Moo comments about the significance of these greetings: “The list of names in this section does not make very interesting reading for most students of Romans. But for those few who are especially interested in the socioeconomic composition of the early church, it is a gold mine. For there was a tendency in the ancient world to give certain names to certain kinds of people; for example, wealthy people high on the social ladder would give their children certain names; slaves or former slaves would use (or be made to use) others.” Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 918.

⁸ In the six NT references where this husband/wife team is mentioned (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19), Priscilla’s name comes first in four of these places (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19). We can’t be sure why this is the case.

⁹ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 927 comments: “Paul’s reference to coworkers (vv. 3, 9; cf. v. 7) reminds us that Paul was not a ‘lone ranger’ kind of missionary. At every point in his ministry, Paul depended on a significant number of others who were working along with him. And if Paul needed such help, how much more do we. There is no room in modern ministry for the lone ranger approach either.”

¹⁰ Prisca and Aquila risked their lives for Paul, perhaps during the disturbance in Ephesus (Acts 19:23–40).

¹¹ The NASB spells the name “Epaenetus” as does the NKJV and NRSV. The NIV and NLT alternately spell the name as “Epenetus.” These spelling differences are slight and make no practical difference.

¹² The feminine name “Junia” is quite rare in Greek. The masculine “Junias” (as a contraction for Junianas), however, is completely unattested in Greek literature. Further, since there are apparently other husband-wife teams mentioned in this salutation (Prisca and Aquila [Rom 16:3], Philologus and Julia [16:15]), it might be natural to think of Junia as a feminine name. This ought not be pressed too far, however, for in 16:12 all three individuals are women [though the first two are linked together], and in 16:9–11 all the individuals are men. In Greek only a difference of accent distinguishes between Junias (male) and Junia (female). If it refers to a woman, it is possible (1) that she had the gift of apostleship (not the office), or (2) that she was not an apostle, but along with Andronicus, was esteemed by (or among) the apostles. As well, the term “prominent” may simply mean “well known,” suggesting that Andronicus and Junia(s) were well known to the apostles. Noting the nontechnical use of the word *apostolos*, Mounce concludes, with reference to women in leadership roles, that “the passage really contributes little to the debate.” Robert Mounce, *Romans*. The New American Commentary series (Nashville: Broadman, 1995), 276.

¹³ The NET captures this idea when it renders this phrase: “They are well known to the apostles.” Storms writes: “More important still is that the term *apostle* is itself used in four senses in the NT: 1) of Jesus as The Apostle; 2) of the 12; 3) of Paul and perhaps 5 or 6 others (Silas, Barnabas, James; cf. 1 Thess. 2:6; Gal. 1:19; 1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 14:4,14); a technical use of a restricted group; and 4) a general use of many individuals who were ‘sent out’ by a church as a delegated representative or messenger (cf. 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25). Most likely, Andronicus and his wife Junias were ‘apostles’ in this fourth sense.” Sam Storms, “Romans 15:1–16:27”:

www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/151-1627; accessed 27 August 2011.

¹⁴ The spelling “Tryphena” is also used by NIV, NKJV, NLT; the name is alternately spelled “Tryphaena” (NASB, NRSV). It is interesting to note that Tryphena means “dainty” and Tryphosa means “delicate.”

¹⁵ Simon of Syrene, who carried the cross of Jesus, is said to have been the father of Alexander and Rufus (cf. Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26). Since Mark’s gospel was written for the church at Rome, this may be the same man. Thus, from one momentous encounter with Jesus, Simon’s wife and son became believers.

¹⁶ Stott eloquently explains: “If anybody deserved to be called Paul’s ‘fellow-worker’, that person was Timothy. For the last eight years Timothy had been Paul’s constant travelling companion and had undertaken several special missions at Paul’s request. The apostle evidently had a warm affection for his young assistant. Having led him to Christ, he regarded him as his son in the faith. He was now in Corinth, about to set sail for Jerusalem with the offering from the Greek churches.” John R. W. Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 401.

¹⁷ Twenty-six people are mentioned by name, plus two individuals not listed by name (Rufus’s mother, Rom 16:13, Nereus’s sister, 16:15).

¹⁸ Nowhere in Paul’s writings do we find such a lengthy list of personal greetings. Furthermore, Paul revealed an intimate knowledge of their family relationships and Christian service. Some have argued that Paul could not have known so many in a church he had never visited. However, the many who are named here may have been Paul’s friends and converts in other places who had moved to Rome. Since he had never been to Rome, he would have been eager to greet the ones he knew.

¹⁹ See www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkw3a4raWfg; accessed 27 August 2011.

²⁰ Boa and Kruidenier, *Romans*, 458.

²¹ Bill Crowder, “The Written Word,” *Daily Bread* (2/1/2010): www.odt.org/2010/02/01/the-written-word/; accessed 9 August 2011.

²² Barnett, *Romans*, 357 notes that early Christianity was a lay movement. This would change towards the end of the New Testament into the era of the so-called “apostolic fathers.”

²³ Moo writes, “Most of the names are ones usually given to slaves or ‘freemen’ (persons who had been set free from slavery).” Douglas J. Moo, “Romans,” *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary* vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 91.

²⁴ Barnett suggests that at least eight of the people included in Paul’s list are Jews or appear to be so. Paul Barnett, *Romans: The Revelation of God’s Righteousness* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2003), 354.

²⁵ Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 328. Stott, *Romans*, 394–98 is rightly impressed with the diversity of the church as well as with its unity; there is certainly diversity “in race, rank, and gender” (395) as well as “a profound unity which transcended its differences” (397).

²⁶ Was this exhortation (aorist middle imperative of *aspazomai*) because they were lacking affection for one another or because they were being encouraged to continue it? Either way, it is a good word for the church today.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26 (see also 1 Pet 5:14).

²⁸ Revised and adapted from David O. Dykes, “The Power of Positive Encouraging” (Rom 16:1–20): www.gabc.org/assets/1485/s120599.pdf; accessed 27 August 2011.

²⁹ For a humble and balanced discussion of women in the church, see Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*. NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 507–10.

³⁰ Stott, *Romans*, 395 counts at least nine women: Prisca, Mary, Junia [see below], Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persus, Rufus’ mother, Julia, and Nereus’ sister. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 927 comments on the significance of women in this list: “Paul’s mention of nine women in this list reminds us (if we needed the reminder) that women played an important role in the early church. Moreover, five of these women— Prisca (v. 3), Junia (v. 7), Tryphaena and Tryphosa (v. 12), and Persis (v. 12) — are commended for their labor ‘in the Lord.’ Ministry in the early church was never confined to men; these greetings and other similar passages show that women engaged in ministries that were just as important as those of men.”

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- ³¹ The word *kopiaio* is used to describe Paul's ministry (1 Cor 15:10; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10) and others who are involved in ministry (1 Cor 16:16; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17).
- ³² Barnett, *Romans*, 354 states that there are at least three house church groups (Rom 16:5a, 14, 15). He then states, "It is possible, however, that a dozen other 'clusters' are implied by the individuals, couples or groups named by Paul."
- ³³ Swindoll, *Insights on Romans*, 335–36.
- ³⁴ Paul only uses the verb *parakaleo* ("I urge") two other times in his letter (12:1; 15:30).
- ³⁵ The term *skopein* ("keep your eye") is a present infinitive, which might well be translated, "continually watch out for . . ." (see Luke 11:35; 2 Cor 4:18; Gal 6:1; Phil 2:4; Phil 3:17). Paul also uses *skopeo* for a right attitude to good teachers (Phil 3:17).
- ³⁶ Paul used the same term for "hindrances" (*skandala*) in Rom 14:13 when discussing our mandate as believers in the lives of fellow saints.
- ³⁷ This is the primary task of the elders of the church (see esp. Acts 20:27–32).
- ³⁸ Among the "seven [things] that are detestable to [the Lord]," the writer of Proverbs listed in the most emphatic position "a man who stirs up dissension among his brothers" (Prov 6:16, 19).
- ³⁹ Osborne, *Romans*, 412: We must remember that Paul is not discussing issues like the security of the believer or predestination (cf. Rom 8–11) but central tenets like the doctrine of Christ or of salvation.
- ⁴⁰ Moo, "Romans," 93 writes: "'Appetites' translates the Greek word *koilia*, 'belly.' The NIV, along with most commentators, take the word by metonymy to refer to the sensual urges generally. But the word may refer to the preoccupation with food laws typical of many Jews in the first century (the same issue arises in Philippians 3:19, where Paul talks of false teachers whose 'god is their stomach')."
- ⁴¹ The noun *chrestologia* ("smooth talk") is only used here in the NT.
- ⁴² Barnett, *Romans*, 359 rightly observes that these false teachers "purport to be Christians, for why would Paul say they do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ unless it appeared that they did? Were they Jews and nothing else, Paul would scarcely have spoken about them like this."
- ⁴³ See also 2 Thess 3:14–15; Titus 3:10; cf. Phil 1:12–18.
- ⁴⁴ R. C. Sproul, *Romans*. St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton: Crossway, 2009), 506.
- ⁴⁵ Cf. Rom 1:8. This is one of Paul's hyperboles.
- ⁴⁶ Paul's language reflects the teaching of Jesus (cf. Matt 10:16; Luke 10:3).
- ⁴⁷ God is described as both the "God of hope" in Rom 15:13 and the "God of peace" here in 16:20 (cf. 15:33; 2 Cor 13:16; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20). This is a striking designation, especially since Paul began the letter by revealing the "God of wrath" (Rom 1:18–32). Paul has come full circle. One of the big themes in Romans is the fact that we have been at war with God and that He has become our peace.
- ⁴⁸ This was a common closing for Paul (cf. 1 Cor 16:23; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18). It was his way of verifying his letters (cf. 1 Cor 16:21; 2 Thess 3:17; Col 4:18).
- ⁴⁹ Perhaps, as Stott, *Romans*, 401 claims, there is an allusion to Gen 3:15. The Church as the body of Christ will indeed crush the head of Satan.
- ⁵⁰ For an excellent book on the subject of spiritual warfare see Clinton E. Arnold, *Three Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).
- ⁵¹ In the Greek these verses are one long, involved sentence that reads differently than the usual Pauline doxology. Previously, Paul has already turned aside to worship God several times in this letter (see Rom 1:25; 7:25; 9:5; 11:33–36).
- ⁵² See also R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*. Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), Electronic ed.
- ⁵³ See Moo, *Romans*, 513: (1) who is able (who has power) cf. 1:4, 16; (2) establish you 1:11; (3) my gospel 1:1, 9, 16; 2:16; (4) revelation/revealed 1:17; cf. 3:21; (5) prophetic writings 1:2; cf. 3:21; (6) believe and obey 1:5; (7) all nations (or Gentiles) 1:5; (8) only God 3:29–30; (9) wise God 11:33–36. Schreiner, *Romans*, 810 states that 1:1–7 and 16:25–27 "function as an *inclusio* for the contents of the letter." See the following similarities between Paul's conclusion (16:25–27) and his introduction (1:1–7) in chart form:

Romans 1	Romans 16
“the gospel of God” (1:1); “not ashamed of the gospel” (1:16)	“my gospel” (16:25)
“concerning His Son” (1:3); “the gospel” (1:16)	“the preaching of Jesus Christ” (16:25)
“that you may be established” (1:11)	“to Him who is able to establish you” (16:25)
“among all the Gentiles” (1:5)	“made known to all the nations” (16:26)
“to bring about the obedience of faith” (1:5)	“leading to obedience of faith” (16:26)
“which He had promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures” (1:2)	“the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets” (16:25b–26a)

⁵⁴ Barnett, *Romans*, 362 n. 17 argues that the usual English translation, “to him who is able,” masks the force of *dunamai* in this context.

⁵⁵ BDAG s.v. *sterizo* 2: “to cause to be inwardly firm or committed, *confirm, establish, strengthen.*”

⁵⁶ The aorist passive participle *gnoristhentos* (“has been made known”) is placed last in the Greek sentence for emphasis. This ties in nicely with the aorist passive participle *phanerothentos* (“to manifest”) that starts the sentence.

⁵⁷ Eaton writes, “We ‘give God glory’. ‘Give to the Lord the glory due to his name!’ (Psalm 29:2). We tell him and everyone who is willing to listen what we feel about him, and how we have come to see more of what He is like. At the end of Romans we have to say ‘I have seen you in the sanctuary, and beheld your power and your glory’ (Psalm 63:2). ‘The heavens declare his righteousness and all the peoples give him glory!’ (Psalm 97:6).” Michael Eaton, *Romans: A Practical Exposition*, forthcoming.

⁵⁸ See also Moo, *Romans*, 516.