

“What Next?”

Romans 15:4-7

Graduate Sunday

What next after graduation? What now? You have transitioned to a new phase of your life. You will now have to make decisions that will affect the rest of your life. What can we learn from this passage of scripture that will help in this transition? How can this scripture benefit each of us?

1. God wants you to look to Him (15:4)

“For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.”

- In these uncertain times, we need guidance and direction. During this pandemic and racial division, many have become confused and insecure. What are we to do? Paul, writing to a diverse and troubled group of believers in Rome, told them that the Scriptures were *“written for our instruction”* so that we would have *“hope through endurance”* and *“encouragement.”* God has given us His Word so that we know what to do and how to live. His Word instructs you and me in the way of life, and gives us encouragement in discouraging times.
- Look to God’s Word for the confidence that you need in your life. The psalmist said: *“As Your words are taught, they give light; even the simple can*

understand them” (Psalm 119:130). He also said: *“Those who love Your teachings will find true peace, and nothing will defeat them”* (Psalm 119:165). The psalmist said: *“Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always”* (Psalm 105:4). So many look to celebrities, intellectuals, and friends for guidance and direction. You look to God. Read His Word for the help that you need and the direction that you seek. Use a Bible app, a devotional book, or a study Bible to help you read the Scriptures.

- The disciples were not learned men, but because they were genuine followers of Jesus, they had the wisdom and the confidence that they needed to carry the Good News to a hostile world. The Jewish leaders, who were opposed to Jesus and the disciples, gave strict orders to the disciples not to teach or preach the name of Jesus. Peter and John stood their ground with the corrupt leaders. Luke wrote: *“When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus”* (Acts 4:13). Look to God and His Word for the help and direction that you need. Look to His Son, Jesus, for the confidence to live for Him.
- ### **2. God wants you to love and accept others (15:5-7)**

Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement allow you to live in harmony with one

another, according to the command of Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with a united mind and voice. Therefore accept one another, just as the Messiah also accepted you..."

- Life is about relationships. You will have some relationships that will last the rest of your life, and some will be temporary. You will cross paths with all kinds of people. If you ask what are you to do in life? One thing is to love and accept others. Paul said to *"live in harmony with one another,"* (v. 5) and *"accept one another, just as the Messiah also accepted you..."* (v. 7). Paul also said: *"If possible, on your part, live at peace with everyone"* (Romans 12:18).
- How do we love and accept others? Through God's Spirit. Ask God to help you love and accept others, even with their flaws and baggage. When asked which was the most important commandment, Jesus replied to love God with all your being, and to *"love your neighbor as yourself"* (Mark 12:29-31). Your *neighbor* is your fellow human being. Jesus concluded by saying: *"There is no greater commandment than these"* (v. 31b). If God's Spirit is in control of your life, you will not have hatred toward others. You may not like what they say or do, but you love them because they are made in the image of God.

- Jesus said to His disciples: *"This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you"* (John 15:12). That is a tough command to obey. But He would not command you to do something that you could not do. With the help of His Spirit, you can love and accept others. Each day, look to God for His guidance, and ask Him to help you to love and accept others, even the ones who are hard to love and accept.

Pastor and author, Warren Wiersbe, said: "How is it possible for Jesus to command us to love one another? Can true love be commanded? You must keep in mind that Christian love is not basically a 'feeling;' it is an act of the will. The proof of our love is not in our feelings but in our actions, even to the extent of laying down our lives for Christ and for one another. Jesus laid down His life for both His friends and His enemies! While the emotions are certainly involved, real Christian love is an act of the will. It means treating others the way God treats us." As you embark on your new life, look to God for direction in His Word and prayer, and love others as Christ loves you.