

We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. ²We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. ³For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me." ⁴Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. ⁵May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. ⁶Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. ⁸Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. ⁹He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name." ¹⁰And in another place it is written, "Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles." ¹¹And yet again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles. Praise him, all you people of the earth." ¹²And in another place Isaiah said, "The heir to David's throne will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on him." ¹³I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁴I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters, that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them. ¹⁵Even so, I have been bold enough to write about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder.

(Chapter 16) ¹⁷And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. ¹⁸Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people. ¹⁹But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. ²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

1. In vss. 1-7 what can we do to please one another?
2. What does it mean to have Jesus as "Lord"? How might that affect our conduct toward others?
3. Why did Paul use some many references from the Old Testament involving "Gentiles" ?
4. What are some sources of power we have to help us overcome selfishness and please others?
5. What do you think "living in harmony" looks like in the church?
6. How does Paul describe or qualify those that cause division?