

## Praying Romans 16

Release Date: October 21, 2019

### Romans 16 (ESV)

**1** I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, **2** that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

**3** Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, **4** who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. **5** Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. **6** Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you. **7** Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me. **8** Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. **9** Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. **10** Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. **11** Greet my kinsman Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. **12** Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. **13** Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. **14** Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers who are with them. **15** Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. **16** Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

**17** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. **18** For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. **19** For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. **20** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**21** Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

**22** I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord.

**23** Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

**25** Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages **26** but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations,

according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— **27** to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

## Adoration

The book of Romans ends with a beautiful song of praise in Romans 16, verses 25–27, reminding us of a glorious truth—that “the gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ,” which were “kept secret for long ages,” have now been made known “to all nations.” This echoes the last commission Jesus gave his followers, to take the gospel to the very ends of the earth.<sup>1</sup> We are “the nations” Paul and Jesus were talking about. Praise God out loud for his great plan of salvation.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Use your own words to praise God that his plan of salvation overcomes everything in this world that our society says should divide us—ethnicity, culture, race, socio-economic status, gender, and class.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Verse 26 declares the Lord to be “the eternal God.” Adore God that he is beyond time and lives forever.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Romans 16:27 says that our God is “the only wise God.” Lift your voice and praise God, that he is wise and the source of all wisdom, all knowledge, and all that is true.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Verse 20 describes the Lord as “the God of peace.” Worship God out loud, that he is a God peace, rest, and order, and that he offers peace to us in Christ.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Father God, you alone have the ability to draw humanity together into a united and loving fellowship. Our nation longs for unity, but only you can create it. Our nation longs for peace, but only you can provide it. Our nation longs for diversity, but only you—the Master Designer—can draw out the beauties of our cultures. In all this, you are great and greatly to be praised.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8.

<sup>2</sup> Ps 145:3.

## Confession

Romans 16:17 cautions the church to “watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.” Confess out loud to God ways that you have wandered from the doctrine you have been taught.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Ask the Spirit of God to reveal any ways your words or actions have “caused division” or “created obstacles” for others in the body of Christ.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Romans 16:18 explains that some “do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites,” with actions like “smooth talk” or deceit. Confess out loud to God specific ways that you choose to serve your own selfish appetites, desires, or interests instead of serving our Lord Christ.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Romans 16:19 says that Christ’s followers should “be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.” Another way to put that is that we should become experts in doing good, all the while staying completely incompetent in doing evil. Because we are all natural experts in evil, the ways our sin manifests itself will look different for each of us. Pause for a few moments to allow the Spirit to call to mind the ways in which you most often pursue the wrong instead of the right.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Ask God to unearth areas where you know—but might not want to admit—you are not pursuing goodness and truth, for God’s glory.

[Pray for 10 seconds.]

Father, we do not love truth, goodness, and beauty as we should. Our hearts are bent towards evil, so much so that evil seems natural to us. But it is not. Remind us that we are yours, twice over. You have made us in your image, so we reflect your goodness. And you have redeemed us by the sacrificial death of your Son, so our future is now tied to that of the perfect, sinless Lamb of God. Keep this truth before us, now and always.

## Thanksgiving

Most readers of Romans 16 are liable to skim over the list of names in verses 3–15, not only because they are hard to read, but because a list of names seems boring and irrelevant to our spiritual life today. Nothing could be further from the truth. Paul did not merely list names. He listed names with history and with meaning. Prisca and Aquila risked their necks for Paul. Mary worked hard for the Roman believers. Andronicus and Junia were people who the apostles themselves mentioned with reverent awe. Rufus’s mother was so dear to Paul that she was like a mother to him.

This extended list reminds us that no one grows in the gospel by themselves. Thank God out loud for the gift of his church. Thank him that he has designed us for community and to share life together, in Christ.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

Many of the people mentioned in Romans 16, verses 3–15, are described as “fellow workers in Christ” and those who “worked hard in the Lord.” Think of all the people who have partnered with you in ministry or helped you grow in your faith. Who first shared the gospel with you? Who taught you to read the Bible? Who encouraged you in difficult times? Who are the mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters—the family of faith—that have loved you? Thank God for these people, by name.

[Pray for 25 seconds.]

Father God, your goodness to us is astounding. Not only have you bridged the gap between heaven and earth, but you have reconciled your children to each other. Your love for us has been obvious throughout our lives through the hands, feet, lips, and the lives of your servants. Thank you for so generously giving us a family of faith and fellow workers in Christ. Open our eyes to see our brothers and sisters in Christ as instruments of your work in this world.

## Supplication

In verse 16, Paul gives a command that makes many of us nervous: “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” Very few churches in the Western world apply this verse literally, and—candidly—we would be pretty uncomfortable if someone attempted it. But there is something beautiful in this command, and we lose a lot if we discard it altogether. To greet someone is to know them. For Paul, greeting someone by their name was not just polite. It was a way of saying, “I know you, I see you, and I love you.” Ask God to make you someone who sees others and seeks to know them well. Ask God to give you the desire to connect with others in a way that reflects the love of Christ.

[Pray for 20 seconds.]

God's people are to be known by their love.<sup>3</sup> Yes, We are the people who know one another's struggles and choose compassion rather than judgment. We weep with those who weep. We rejoice with those who rejoice.<sup>4</sup> We bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.<sup>5</sup> Ask God to make you a person of love. Call out specific relationships in which you want God to help you respond with God-honoring compassion.

[Pray for 25 seconds.]

Romans 16:25 mentions God's ability to strengthen his people in Jesus Christ. Where do you need to be strengthened today for God's glory? Ask God to strengthen you "according to [the] gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ."

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

Verse 26 explains that God works in us, through his Word, "to bring about the obedience of faith." In your own words, ask God to give you joy to walk in faith and obey his commands.

[Pray for 15 seconds.]

## Benediction

Father God, you are the only wise God. You had a plan, before the creation of the world, to create and unify the diverse cultures of the earth. You had a plan, before the creation of the world, to redeem wayward sinners to yourself. You had a plan, before the creation of the world, to restore us to each other, overcoming everything that would otherwise divide us. Your wisdom is greater than we could ever know, but praise God, so is your love for us. Let us never forget it.

AMEN.

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<sup>3</sup> John 13:35.

<sup>4</sup> Rom 12:15.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor 13:7.



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