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Romans

...that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. Romans 15:32

Taking the entire thought of verses 30-32 together we find the necessary context for this verse -

"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you."

The "prayers to God" for Paul were requested in the immediate sense that he would be "delivered from those in Judea" and also that his service to the saints in Jerusalem might be acceptable. If those two things occurred, he was certain that in the long term he would be free to go to Rome and meet with the saints there "with joy by the will of God."

These things in fact happened. He was delivered from those in Judea. The account in Acts is an amazing read. His life was threatened several times, almost coming to bodily harm. There was a plot to have him assassinated. He was imprisoned and spoke before rulers and even a king. But he was delivered, albeit in chains as a prisoner, from those in Judea. In those chains, he was taken to Rome to face trial

before Caesar. Certainly none of this was expected, but "the will of God" was realized.

The book of Acts ends with the note that, "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him." Acts 28:30, 31

Though bound under house arrest, he was "refreshed together" with those in Rome. The anticipated and prayed-for meeting did come about and God's will was realized.

Life application: He is there... God is there even when it seems He is far distant. Because God is Spirit, we don't see Him and we often wonder about the events which happen around us. But if we truly live in the Spirit, remain obedient through the trials, and keep our thoughts and eyes fixed on Jesus, we can always have the certainty that everything is as it should be.

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen. Romans 15:33

In verse 15:13, Paul used the term "God of hope." This followed directly after a citation from Isaiah about Jesus, the Hope of the Gentiles. Thus He is the hope of both Jew and Gentile. Now in this final verse of chapter 15, which closes out the major portion of his doctrinal statements and his future intentions, he calls on the "God of peace." He has just asked for prayers and deliverance from possible trials ahead and in hopes of coming to Rome that they "may be refreshed together."

The concept of peace to the Hebrew is more than quietness. Rather it is a state of wholeness. It includes contentment, health, and even prosperity. This is what he was looking for their prayers to accomplish for him. In anticipation of that, he offers his own for them, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

The God of peace is also the one to grant us His peace. He is the one who fashioned us and the one who knows our every need. Only in Him can true peace be found. Paul understood this and reflected it in his requests from those in Rome and has stated it in this short prayer for them as well. But another aspect of this petition must be considered based on the content of the epistle.

Throughout this letter, Paul has spoken about the various ways the gospel is directed toward Jew and Gentile. He has also shown how Jew and Gentile come to the gospel with their own backgrounds and so they will apply it to their lives based on that. Rather than this being a point of disharmony between the two, he has shown that God has accepted both and therefore there should be peace between them, not conflict or strife.

This state is explained very clearly in Ephesians 2:11-22 and it is well worth the time to read those verses in the light of Romans 15:33. In that portion of Ephesians, he will say this -

"And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."
Ephesians 2:17, 18

As you can see, Paul is very consistent in his use of wording, terminology, and doctrine. The same "God of peace" mentioned in Romans 15:33 is the one that is both explained and exalted in Ephesians 2.

Life application: Paul's comments are consistently directed to both Jew and Gentile and he never mixes the two, nor does he indicate that one would somehow "replace" the other. He never teaches that the church has replaced Israel nor that Jew and Gentile are now the same. It is true that there is no distinction between the two in Christ, but there is a difference between the two as members of Christ, just as there is a difference between male and female.

I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea... Romans 16:1

The last chapter of Romans begins with Paul's introduction of Phoebe, one of approximately 35 people that he will mention in the verses to come. His note, "I commend to you Phoebe our sister" is used as a way of highlighting her as a member of the church. Because she was travelling with the epistle, she was either specially chosen or volunteered for the duty. Thus she was a woman of note and so Paul includes the thought "I commend." As a believer in Christ, she was thus to be treated in a worthy manner. In Galatians 3:28, we read that -

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Being a woman in the empire at this time and with a number of Jewish people in the church at Rome, without Paul's commending her to them, it is possible that they would have treated her in a manner of less weight than she was so entitled. Based on her name, we know that she was a Gentile. And because she is traveling with the epistle, she was most likely a widow. Women who were never married, or who were currently married, would not be given such freedom to travel. Therefore, being a widow is an obvious conclusion.

Next Paul notes concerning her, that she "is a servant of the church." The Greek word for "deaconess" is used here and so many try to interject that she was an instructor of the church or one who performed some type of ministerial function. It should be noted though that Scripture will never violate one of its own precepts. In 1 Timothy 2:12, it is explicitly noted that a woman is not to teach or have authority over a man. Therefore, any role she held would have been in a capacity which would not violate this precept. There would have been a specific order of women in the church for the service of other women.

As Albert Barnes notes concerning this, "Reference is made to a class of females whose duty it was to 'teach' other females, and to take the general

superintendence of that part of the church, in various places in the New Testament; and their existence is expressly affirmed in early ecclesiastical history. They appear to have been commonly aged and experienced widows, sustaining fair reputation, and suited to guide and instruct those who were young and inexperienced."

In this, there is nothing intended to diminish the value or importance of women, but there is - just as in the family unit, a hierarchy which has been established and which is intended for the overall good of those within it. This precept has been neglected in modern churches and doctrine has suffered because of it. When one precept is violated, it quickly leads to the violation of others.

Lastly, Paul notes that her position was at the "church in Cenchrea." Cenchrea was a sea-port near Corinth and so it can be deduced that the epistle was probably written by Paul there in Corinth.

Life application: When evaluating Scripture, such as the verse today where Phoebe is called a "servant" or "deaconess," the entire body of Scripture must be considered. Just because the title "deacon" is used in certain ways when speaking of others, it does not immediately mean that all people mentioned with that title bore the same level of authority or responsibility. Scripture will never violate Scripture. One must be careful when making assumptions to include a detailed analysis of everything the Bible intends for us to see.

...that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Romans 16:2

Speaking of Phoebe from the previous verse, Paul continues his thought. He commended her to the Romans because she was a "servant of the church in Cenchrea." Because of this he desired that they would "receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints." In Christ, the once-limiting or exalting distinctions

of "Jew," "Gentile," "male," and "female" are set aside and all are one in Him. Therefore, it was his desire that she be so noted and treated.

In addition to receiving her, he wished them to go even further and to "assist her in whatever business she has need of" from them. If this meant time, resources, or money then Paul would desire them to go to those lengths in order to accommodate her. It is certain that if men had been sent on this mission, they would have received such things and Paul was establishing now that the same courtesies should be extended to women. As Paul's letters are doctrine for the church, this precedent is intended to be carried out in all subsequent generations.

Finally, he gives another reason for his request. It is because "indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also." The word here for "helper" is *prostatis* and it indicates a female guardian, protector, or patroness. This is an honorable title and so it is Paul's way of saying she is deserving of their assistance because of the position. This word *prostatis* is used only here in the New Testament. The verb form of it is always used with some sort of leadership position and so modern and liberal scholars make the unfounded supposition that she was therefore in such a leadership position.

This is inappropriate handling of such a word because elsewhere Paul has stated that women are not to be in such positions of authority over men. Therefore the translation "helper" is certainly appropriate. To translate this as a "leader," particularly in the context of Paul's surrounding words, would lead to exceptional confusion in doctrine and disorder within the church. The title, as given here, means that she probably was one who greatly helped Paul and others by providing meals, lodging, etc. She was probably also one to visit the sick in the congregation and to help others at the expense of herself; a tireless servant of the Lord.

As she was probably a widow (as noted in the previous verse), she would be the ultimate example of one, such as is described in 1 Timothy 5:9, 10. Paul recognized her importance, used her in the significant cause of transmitting the

epistle because of this, and desired others to recognize her and reward her as well.

Life application:

Stop. Ask yourself, "Have I been a tireless servant of the Lord? Have I used my time and energy in the most effective way in serving Him?"

Consider. What can you do to improve upon the negative answer you just gave to yourself?

Determine. Resolve to develop your service for the Lord.

Act. Put your resolution into action.

Honor. Don't let your future service become a point of boasting. Instead, give God the glory for whatever you do in the name of Jesus Christ.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,... Romans 16:3

Priscilla and Aquila are noted in several places in the book of Acts and in Paul's other epistles. To get a full grasp of who they are, here are the verses which speak of them -

"After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers." Acts 18:1-3

"So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him." Acts 18:18

"The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." 1 Corinthians 16:19

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus." 2 Timothy 4:19

These comments show the nearness of them to Paul's heart. They met Paul after having been ordered out of Rome. When they met him, they immediately became friends. They worked together because they shared the same profession, tentmakers. In Acts 18:11 it says that Paul remained in Corinth for "a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them." And then in Acts 18:18 (above) it says that "Paul remained a good while" after that. In other words, they spent several years of their lives together at Corinth and became fast friends.

It should be noted that some scholars (and translations such as the Latin Vulgate) place her name here as "Prisca" rather than "Priscilla" as it is written in 2 Timothy 4:19 (above.) They claim that this is the true reading of it. Probably, the different spelling of her name is given as a term of familiarity, like a nickname.

When writing to Timothy, who was Paul's protégé and who doubtless knew her very well, Paul used the more endearing term "Prisca" because Timothy would use that name too. However, in Acts and in Paul's other formal greetings the name "Priscilla" is used. This then would be comparable to saying "Greet Jim Blanchard for me when you see him" when speaking to a mutual friend, but saying "I and James Blanchard greet you heartily in the Lord" when writing an official letter to another church. This easily resolves the confusion which scholars and translators pick up on when speaking of Priscilla.

Another point concerning these two is that Priscilla is mentioned first, thus leading many scholars to state that she was "probably as being the more prominent and helpful to the Church" (Jamieson-Faucett-Brown), or that it "seems to imply that she was the more efficient" (Peoples New Testament), etc. This is an unnecessary conclusion. In 1 Corinthians 16:19 (above) the salutation reads, "Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord." The chosen order by

Paul probably reflects 1) the person who was most on his mind at the time, 2) the linguistic style for the situation. In other words, we would say "Tom, Dick, and Harry" rather than another order because it is the customary use of the names. To Paul, it appears that the order is less important than we tend to infer.

Understanding who these two are and their importance in the life of Paul, we can then understand his greeting to the Romans. He says they are "my fellow workers in Christ Jesus." Together they had spent at least several years working and sharing in the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul remembered them with affection and noted them first out of all of the people he will refer to at the church at Rome.

Life application: In our generation today, the art of letter writing has almost been lost. Before the advent of the internet, correspondence was transmitted slowly and care had to be taken to contemplate the words that would be written. Letters began with salutations appropriate to the intended recipients and it ended with carefully worded thoughts, reflections, or greetings. Today, emails between even the closest of friends often disregard simple greetings. Make an effort to slow down and use care when writing notes. There is a last time for all things, including sending letters to others. Someday either you or your correspondent will be gone. Consider this as you send your heart and feelings across the miles and through the airwaves.

...who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Romans 16:4

Speaking of Priscilla and Aquila, Paul says that they "risked their own necks for my life." The Greek term is literally rendered, "placed under" their necks. In other words, they had risked their lives, even to the point where they could have been placed under the axe, thus having their heads chopped off at the neck. What they did for Paul isn't recorded, but he was in trouble so often and out of favor with so many, that just being around him would inevitably lead to danger. And so those near him could point and say "there he is," or they could risk themselves for his sake. These two chose the latter.

How unlike them were those who Paul later writes about in 2 Timothy 4:9-16 -

"Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them."

Priscilla and Aquila were steadfast in their friendship and devotion to their beloved companion and he desired them to be so noted. For this, he wanted them recognized individually, but he knew that many others had been there for him in the past as well. And so he notes "also all the churches of the gentiles." Wherever he went and wherever churches were established, the gentiles had understood the gospel, received Christ, and emulated Him in their care for Paul. The message was going forth by his hand and he was grateful for their concern as it went out.

Life application: What kind of friend will you be to those Christians who stand on the gospel when it becomes more and more unpopular to do so? As the times progress, persecution will only increase for those who stand fast on the word of God. Will you be noted like Priscilla and Aquila, or will you abandon those who are willing to give their life for the truth contained in the Bible? Decide now and be ready.

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Romans 16:5

After first noting Priscilla and Aquila, Paul takes the time to ask that those who receive his letter to, "Likewise greet the church that is in their house." If Paul is

writing to the saints in Rome, then why would a separate address be made to these two and the church that met in their home? The answer is that, as Vincent's Word Studies notes, "The expression here denotes, not the whole church, but that portion of it which met at Aquila's house."

At this time, there were no established buildings used specifically for churches. Although there may have been an overall church, among whom there were all known members, there were individual locations where people would go to meet, one being the house of Priscilla and Aquila." They were tireless in their approach to spreading the word and teaching the truth. Wherever they are noted, they are always shown to be instructing and accommodating others. In Rome, instead of their house being a private sanctuary away from the commotion of life, it was a place where believers would come and share in the Lord. The same is true when they lived elsewhere. In 1 Corinthians 16:19, Paul noted this concerning them -

"The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.'

Paul's next greeting was to his "beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ." He certainly had dear affections for this person and yet this is the only time that he is specifically mentioned in the Bible. However, he could be mentioned elsewhere under a different name. Epaphroditus is a Greek name, but often (noted several times even in the New Testament) Jewish people had two different names, one Hebrew and one Greek. Epaphroditus means "praised" which in Hebrew would be the name Judah. So he could have been known to Paul by this, or another name.

Regardless of the certainty of this, he is called "the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ." The term firstfruits comes from the Old Testament. At the beginning of a harvest season, the first ripe grain was cut and then taken as an offering to the Lord. This offering was to acknowledge God's provision and looked forward to the greater harvest which was soon to ripen. When this was presented, the following ritual noted in Deuteronomy took place -

“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, ‘I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come to the country which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us.’ “Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. And you shall answer and say before the Lord your God: ‘My father was a Syrian, about to perish, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. But the Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. Then we cried out to the Lord God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, “a land flowing with milk and honey”; and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O Lord, have given me.’ Then you shall set it before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God. So you shall rejoice in every good thing which the Lord your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is among you.”

This firstfruit offering then was made to God in gratitude for how He has cared for His people. The implication is clear. Epaenetus is that offering, being of the first of the converts, and he was offered "to" Christ. This then implies the deity of Christ because the offering is made to Him as Lord. But Jesus is also called the "Firstfruits" in 1 Corinthians 15:20. Thus Christ is the fulfillment of the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-14) in His resurrection. After that the harvest then continues in Him to God (Leviticus 23:15-22) as began at Pentecost in the giving of the Holy Spirit.

Epaenetus is that first offering of the area of Achaia. But, it should be noted that even though this is so, Paul also uses this term in 1 Corinthians 16 -

"I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us." 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16

Because the term is used of the household of Stephanas, it is very possible that Epaenetus was of this household and this would explain why Paul singles him out in this way. This cannot be determined for certain, but it would clarify why the same term is used of both.

Life application: Priscilla and Aquila were tireless servants of the Lord, opening their home to the saints in their area as a church. Epaenetus was the "firstfruits" of Achaia. Paul has noted these people for their impact upon his life. In this we can learn these two things - 1) We should take note of, and acknowledge, those who are faithful and tireless in their work for the Lord; 2) Those who are faithful and tireless in the Lord are not forgotten by others and their deeds are, in fact, remembered. If this is so, then how much more does the Lord remember their deeds!

Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Romans 16:6

Paul asks now for a special greeting for Mary. Her name comes from the Hebrew "Mariam" which means "Rebellion" or "Obstinacy." Rather than being a rebel though, she "labored much for us." A different source text renders "for you" instead of "for us" and so many modern versions read it this way. "Us" is probably the better choice though because Paul hasn't yet been to Rome and so it is unclear as to how she would have come to Paul's note. But if she was previously in Greece with Paul like Priscilla and Aquila, then he would know first-hand about her labors.

This is the only time she is mentioned in Scripture although there are a total of six "Mary's" of note in the Bible. Like other faithful and hard working people, this one

sentence is what defines her for all time in God's word. A similar person of note is found in Nehemiah 3.

As the walls around Jerusalem were being built, individuals took care to work on specific sections of it. Some erected the gates, others cared for sections close to where they lived. Nehemiah records who worked, where they worked, and he also gives insights into their job performance. Out of the blue, a man mentioned nowhere else in the Bible is highlighted -

"Next to him, Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section, from the angle to the entrance of the house of Eliashib the high priest." Nehemiah 3:20 (NIV)

Baruch, whose name means "Blessed," didn't stay home and watch through the windows. Nor did he head out for fishing and camping with his family. He went to work on the wall. And as Nehemiah observed him, he didn't say, "Baruch slacked along at a snail's pace." Instead, he was given an A+ rating by the Bureau of Better Wall Builders. His report card notes that he "zealously repaired another section of the wall." He, together with Mary in Romans 16 who "labored much for us," are rewarded in God's eternal word with notes of praise for their efforts.

Life application: If you were to receive your evaluation for your labors in the work God has assigned you today, what would the report card say? Think on this because we all have a day of evaluation coming up as we stand before the Lord. Be like Baruch and Mary and be noted as zealous laborers for the Lord!

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Romans 16:7

In his next request for greeting, Paul singles out Andronicus and Junia. They are listed nowhere else in Scripture and so many things are uncertain about them. The name Junia is feminine, but some versions convert it to masculine Junias in

order to avoid confusion; something which only leads to more confusion! The reason for the change is because of the use of the word "apostle" in the sentence. That will be evaluated in a moment. It is probable that these two were either married or siblings and so he notes them together as he did with Priscilla and Aquila.

First, Paul calls them "my countrymen." This is the word *syngeneis*; it means "kinsmen" and it has one of two possible meanings concerning their relation to Paul. The first is that they are Jewish as he is, thus they are "kinsmen according to the flesh." This would be comparable to what he says in Romans 9:3 when speaking of the Jews -

"For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh..." Romans 9:3

The second possibility is that they are actually his relatives. This is a strong possibility because in this long list of people he is greeting, there are other Jews mentioned and he doesn't call all of them his "kinsmen." He will again use the term in verses 11 and 21 though. In verse 21, he is certainly speaking of those listed as "Jews" and not as "relatives." So this could go either way.

After noting this, he then calls them "my fellow prisoners." Regardless of whether they are immediate family or only related as Jews, they had an intimate bond with Paul who was often imprisoned (see 2 Corinthians 6:5 or 2 Corinthians 11:23 concerning this). They were willing to be imprisoned for the name of Christ as Paul was and he wanted this to be known to those he was writing to.

Because of their life for Christ, they were "of note among the apostles." Again however, this could have one of several meanings. The first is in the context of their service. They are "of note among the [other] apostles." This would mean that they weren't noted only by Paul, but by all of the apostles. The second possibility is that they were actually apostles and they were "apostles of note." If this is the case, it would then have one of two possibilities.

The first is that they were actually designated "apostles" as were Peter, James, John, et al. The second is that the term "apostle" is used in a broader sense with its original meaning - "sent ones." They were merely people sent to proclaim Christ, but not numbered among the actual witnesses of the work of Christ. Thus "apostle" here is a designation of service and not one of office.

The most likely option of these three is the first. They were noted "by" the apostles rather than being noted "as" apostles. The reason for this is that the title isn't used in the sense of designation as it is used elsewhere by Paul, such as in his introductory comments of Romans and his other epistles.

The term "apostle" as a designation is incorrectly applied today. The apostolic age ended with the completion of the Bible and therefore, there are no actual "apostles" in the church. There are many who claim the title, but none who have earned it. It is reserved for those who directly bore witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Finally, as a note of their long service, he states that these two were "in Christ before me." This means that they had received Christ before he had. It almost sounds as if he envied this. He had walked contrary to Christ and worked against Him. And not only that, he needed a special calling and a visible, tangible manifestation of the Lord before he was converted. These two had come to the Lord by faith. Paul notes this as exemplary and worthy of note.

Life application: When noting others, a good way to highlight their life or deeds is to do so in comparison to yourself when they excel you in one area or another. There is nothing which diminishes you when you exalt another. Instead, it shows a properly placed care for what they rightly deserve.

Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Romans 16:8

Various texts state "Ampliatius" in place of Amplias. Regardless of the actual spelling of his name, or if Amplias is simply a shortened nickname of Ampliatius, this is the only place in the Bible where he is mentioned, but he is given an especially endearing description by Paul, "my beloved in the Lord." Four times in this chapter the term "beloved" is used by him. Out of approximately 35 names, this then shows that there was more than just a passing friendship, but one of intimacy.

It could be that Paul led him to Christ or that they worked together for the gospel. Whatever the situation, Paul is using up the writer's ink with memos of affection as he progresses through his list of notables.

Life application: Time moves steadily forward and we don't know when our last day will come. Nor do we know the end of those around us. Because of this, it is good to take a moment and recognize those who are near and dear to us. Take a minute today to send a note of encouragement to someone who is dear to you.

Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

Romans 16:9

Paul next takes the time to note a city boy and a country bumpkin. Urbanus means "belonging to the city" or "city-bred" and Stachys means "ear of grain." Urbanus was a rather common Roman name and was even the name used by 8 different popes of the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand Stachys is a Greek name and references to it are far less common in ancient literature.

Extra-biblical writings note that both of these men continued on in their work for the Lord. Urbanus is believed to maybe have been an early pastor of the church in Rome, and Stachys is said by John Gill to have been one of the original 70 disciples mentioned in Luke 10:1, and that he further became a bishop of Byzantium.

However, these two are only noted here in Scripture. Urbanus is noted by Paul as "our fellow worker in Christ." Whatever his work, he was there with the apostles or others helping out behind the scenes. Stachys is noted as "my beloved" which indicates a special note of friendliness and devotion.

Life application: God uses people of all sorts to accomplish His work. Regardless of where you are from, what has occurred in your past, or what your social standing is, or even what you do for a living, there is always a use for you. Allow the Lord to become your driving motivation in all things.