

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part VII: God's Righteousness Exemplified In Paul's Personal Messages, Romans 15:14-16:27

B. The Priority Schedule For Paul's Exemplary Life And Ministry

(Romans 15:23-33)

I. Introduction

- A. God's righteousness as seen in Paul's ministry is worth noting, for since he is the greatest missionary in Church History, his ministry offers an excellent example of the **kind** of *spiritual* ministry God wants **us** to have.
- B. One realm of ministry that has been a problem for Christian workers in recent times is how to prioritize one's responsibilities so as to live and to serve the Lord honorably. After all, Christians have many responsibilities with family, home, work, etc. that often seem hard to juggle in a God-honoring way.
- C. God's righteousness was exemplified in Paul's priority schedule in ministry, and the way he laid it out in Romans 15:23-33 is invaluable for our practical insight and application (as follows):

II. The Priority Schedule For Paul's Exemplary Life And Ministry, Romans 15:23-33.

- A. In Romans 15:23-33, Paul mentioned several responsibilities he had to address in his life and ministry:
 1. In Romans 15:23-24a, Paul alluded to his duty before God as an Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. Ephesians 3:1-9) to reach the lost Gentile world in particular with the Gospel of Christ, cf. also Romans 15:20-21.
 2. However, in Romans 15:23-24, 28-29, Paul mentioned his long-sought desire to visit believers in Rome that he might minister to them for their edification and they to minister to him for his building up in Christ.
 3. In addition, in Romans 15:25-26, Paul wrote of his need to go to Jerusalem to deliver much-needed finances from collections taken by believers in the churches of Macedonia and Achaia for poverty-stricken believers in Jerusalem. The Gentile donors who received the Gospel from Jerusalem saints were obliged to address the material livelihood needs of Jerusalem saints who had given them the Gospel, Rom. 15:27.
 4. Finally, in Romans 15:30-33, Paul mentioned the need for prayer for protection from his ministry enemies.
- B. Nevertheless, all of these responsibilities are **prioritized** by Paul in Romans 15:23-33, providing an invaluable example for us in developing God-honoring priority schedules for our lives and ministries (as follows):
 1. The **first** priority on Paul's agenda was that of addressing **pressing livelihood needs**:
 - a. Though he intended to visit his believing readers in Rome and then be financially helped by them to go to Spain to minister the Gospel in that realm (Romans 15:24), Paul was **first** headed to Jerusalem with the offering of the Macedonia and Achaia churches for poverty-stricken Jerusalem believers, Rom. 15:25-26. Paul wrote his Romans epistle from Corinth (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1593), so he was headed the **opposite** direction from Rome and Spain to meet this need. (Ibid., Map 14: The Spread of Christianity)
 - b. Thus, Paul addressed **pressing livelihood needs** in other believers **above** his formal ministry calling of reaching the unreached and **above** his ministering to edify mature believers in Rome (Romans 15:14).
 - c. In **addition**, Paul addressed this livelihood need at the **risk** of his **own safety** in Judaea, Rom. 15:31-32.
 - d. Accordingly, **pressing livelihood needs** was this servant of God's **FIRST** priority in life and ministry!
 2. The **second** priority on Paul's agenda was that of **his calling to evangelize the unreached**:
 - a. We note that Paul had long delayed ministering to edify believers in Rome due to his need to fulfill his calling to evangelize the unreached lost Gentile world, Romans 15:22-23 with Romans 15:20-21.
 - b. This does not mean that every believer should put evangelism above edifying other believers, for Paul's gifting was that of an apostle and his calling was to reach primarily unreached Gentiles, different from a teacher or a pastor in a local church whose calling before God is to edify the saints in that local church.
 - c. However, one's **ministry CALLING** should be his priority second only to pressing livelihood needs.
 3. The **third** priority on Paul's agenda was **edifying saints to whom he had not been called** to minister as his main priority, what he intended to do en route to reaching the lost in Spain, Romans 15:23-24, 28-29.
 4. Paul's **fourth** priority in his agenda was **his own safety** from **enemies of his ministry**. He mentions this issue last in his list of duties, and simply asks prayer so he can better minister to others, Romans 15:30-33.

Lesson: Paul's priority schedule in his exemplary in life and ministry was (1) first to address pressing livelihood needs, (2) then his ministry calling, (3) followed by edifying believers to whom he had not been called (4) followed in turn by addressing his own safety from the foes of his ministry.

Application: May we heed Paul's example in life and ministry in (1) addressing pressing livelihood issues, (2) then our calling, (3) then edifying believers to whom we are not called and (4) then our safety from foes to our ministry.