

COMPETENT TO COUNSEL
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Romans 15:14

1. Over the past several weeks we have been focusing on Romans 14 and 15.
2. In these chapters Paul taught that genuine Christians are to accept one another, be accountable to one another, and assume responsibility for one another.
3. The biblical model related to how a local church is to function has, in large part, been lost.
4. In most churches the members have handed over to the pastor and staff the responsibility of ministry to the body; the bigger the church the bigger the staff.
5. The verse we are considering today was addressed to “all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints.” Romans 1:7
6. Paul expected his general epistles, those addressed to churches, to be circulated and read publicly.
 - a. Col 4:16
When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.
 - b. 1 Tim 4:13
Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.
NOTE: Very few Christians had access to the Scriptures or the writings of the Apostles so it was important that both be read publicly.
7. In 1970, Dr. Jay Adams published a book titled, “Competent to Counsel.”
8. The book was based on Romans 15:14, and defined what Dr. Adams called “Nouthetic Counseling.”
 - a. Wikipedia defines Nouthetic Counseling as a form of Evangelical Protestant pastoral counseling based solely upon the Bible and focused on Christ.
 - b. Dr. Adams stated that Nouthetic Counseling consists of lovingly confronting people out of a deep concern in order to help them make changes that God requires.”
9. Notice again what Paul wrote to all who were beloved of God in Rome.

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves (each one of you) are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able (competent) also to admonish (counsel) one another.
10. This verse states what God’s intention is for every believer, and that is for every believer to be competent to counsel others-both believers and non-believers.
11. For effective counseling to take place there must be:

I. Concern.

- A. Notice that Paul was convinced that the Roman Christians were full of goodness.
- B. In order to be full of goodness they needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Gal 5:22-23

- But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, **patience, kindness, goodness**, faithfulness, **gentleness**, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- C. The love of Christ and a genuine concern for others should be the motivation behind all that we do in Jesus' name.
- D. The word goodness implies uprightness of heart and life, and goodness gives credibility to our ministry to others.

II. Competence.

- A. The second thing Paul was convinced of was that the Christians in Rome were filled with all knowledge.
 - B. Those who were preaching and teaching God's Word in Rome were properly instructing the membership of the church, and the individual members were being equipped for the work of service. Eph 4:11-13
 - And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service**, to the building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.
 - C. Every believer should "Be diligent to present (themselves) approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15
 - D. Note Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-17.
 - You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, **15** and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; **17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
 - E. No counsel is better than wrong counsel.
- NOTE: On Friday Sandra and I went out for breakfast and could not help but overhear two young women counseling one another. The blind were leading the blind.

III. Confrontation.

- A. The third thing Paul was convinced of was that individual Christians in Rome were able or competent to admonish (correct, instruct) one another.
- B. Note Paul's words to the Thessalonians. 1 Thess 5:11, 14 (AMP)
 - "Therefore encourage (admonish, exhort) one another and edify (strengthen and build up) one another, **just as you are doing**...And we earnestly beseech you, brethren, admonish (warn and seriously advise) those who are out of line [the

loafers, the disorderly, and the unruly]; encourage the timid and fainthearted, help and give your support to the weak souls, [and] be very patient with everybody [always keeping your temper].”

C. The fact that not everyone will respond positively to being confronted or held accountable does not release us from our obligation to love, care and confront.

NOTE: The modern American Church does not lend itself to what was God’s original intent as to how a local body of believers is to operate. Few Christians feel competent to counsel which is in itself a failure on the part of the church. Also, individual Christians do not want other believers intruding in their personal lives, and for some this even includes their pastors. However, those who love the Lord will respond positively, repent and grow; while those who love themselves will resist and often go somewhere else or not at all.

IV. Change.

A. Personally I am not interested in imposing anything on people, but I do want to see growth and change where it is needed.

B. Note again that the goal of Biblical Counseling is help people to make the changes that God requires in order for their lives to be pleasing to God and useful to God.

C. How can we say that we love people while ignoring their wrong, harmful, and often destructive behavior?

D. Paul wrote these words to the Corinthian Christians, “I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as beloved children.” 1 Corinthians 4:14

E. All Paul wanted was for those he loved to be in right relationship with God and for them to live before God the life Christ purchased for them.

APPLICATION

1. My goal for this church is that we, as a local body of believers, fulfill God’s original intent related to what a church was to be and how it was to operate.

2. Under the headship of Jesus Christ we are to love each other, be accountable to each other, and fulfill our individual and corporate responsibilities to each other.

3. I want to close with a few more words from the Apostle Paul, Eph 4:14-16

As a result (of the ministry of the Word), we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, **according to the proper working of each individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. Ephesians 4:14-16