

## How to Glorify God

Romans 15:5-13

Have you ever needed something to “keep on keeping on” with the story of your life? Life is like this. You are moving along down the storyline of your life when the road gets bumpy, or the bridge is out. What do you do now? Instead of “Easy Street,” you’re on “Needy Street.” You need something; you just have to have it or it seems that you cannot go on. Your personal saga seems bogged down until you get it. The way ahead looks too difficult, too dangerous, or too discouraging to go on. What should you do? On the basis of today’s passage, the answer is this: look for the intersections. We call these “crossroads.” In the city, our officials have laid out “crosswalks.” What a great name for us to latch on to! Look for the cross-roads and the cross-walks. Now at first glance, these may seem like an interruption: a stop sign or even a dead end; but it’s actually a new way of living. As believers, we can come to the Word of God and look for these intersections. You will find them at the corner of “Your Story” and “God’s Glory,” – and it’s a cross-road! So what do you need? Are you discouraged or in despair? Find encouragement right here. Do you need patience? It’s always available at this crucial crossroad. Do you need directions to joy and peace? Here it is. Are you weary of living like a weakling in a mediocre, self-serving manner? You’ve come to the right crosswalk! In this passage you will find a sense of belonging and the courage to face each new day. Meet the God who planned for you to be filled with joy and peace.

### *God’s Glorious Crossroads*

The Bible is full of these intersections. In Psalm 3:2-3, we find such a crossroad: many may rise up against me and say there is no help in God. That seems like a dead end, doesn’t it? But at this intersection, I find that the Lord is my Shield, my Glory and the One who lifts up my head! In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Paul told us how to face disease, infirmities, insults, hardships and calamities; there he found the cross-road of God’s glory. The Lord taught Paul, “**My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.**” So get your Bible out and look for intersections. Picture “your story” as a horizontal line – the storyline of a needy person. Then picture “God’s glory” like a vertical line, intersecting your storyline. You will find Biblical passages that introduce you to God’s majestic glory where He meets your personal needs. His mighty deeds meet your greatest needs.

### **Glorifying God: Magnifying God’s Unique Excellence**

When we speak of “the glory of God,” we are describing His unique excellence (as declared in Isaiah 45:5-7). He alone is God. To *glorify* God is to exhibit or express His unique excellence to others. God glorifies His name (John 12:28). The Son of God glorified God the Father (John 17:4). God the Father glorified the Son (Hebrews 1:8-9). We express God’s unique excellence when we bear fruit, as His disciples (John 15:8). To do otherwise is to live in defeat. The glories of man are like flowers that wither, or grass that is cut (1 Peter 1:24). Instead of seeking glory for ourselves, let’s find real joy by magnifying the unique excellence of our glorious God!

### **Intersection 15:5 – Where you meet the God of patience and encouragement, 5-7**

Do you ever feel like you need patience and courage to put up with people and keep moving ahead? Maybe you feel disconnected from others in the congregation; you don’t feel a sense of belonging. Or maybe you just feel that you live a mediocre existence, and that there is no real joy or excitement. This road feels like a dead end. Then look at your Bible like a “GPS” – God’s positioning system – and you

will find that you are at intersection 15:5 (in Romans 15:5) where **“the God of patience and consolation”** meets you to change things. It’s one of the crossroads of **“Your Story”** and **“God’s Glory.”** God – the Source of patience and encouragement – can bring you into spiritual harmony with other believers. He can give you a sense of belonging in the joy of fellowship with others.

*Practical Application: Glorify God Together, 5-6*

“But,” you might say, “it’s not just up to me, or just about me. There are other people involved. How can we get everyone moving in the same direction?” Here at the intersection of 15:5, the word “you” is plural in the original language; it was written to the congregation of believers at Rome. Down South, we say “ya’ll” as in “you all” or “all ya’ll.” God’s glory is so great that He can change a whole congregation’s story. And the results are great! **“<sup>5</sup> Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Paul fervently wished and prayed that God, who is the Source of patience and encouragement, would grant this request. We can pray in the same way. His prayer was that God would be glorified – that His unique excellence would be magnified – through His people coming together in spiritual harmony. We can sing together “with one mind and one mouth” to glorify God. We can share God’s Word in Sunday school and in our fellowship groups, to magnify the God who gives us spiritual harmony. Christians know this: **“God sets the solitary in families”** (Psalm 68:6). Christian spouses and family members can dwell in unity in their own homes. At this intersection where **“Our Story”** meets **“God’s Glory,”** the Lord grants something to us. He grants us the ability to come together in unity – being likeminded toward each other – in the crosswalk: **“according to Christ Jesus.”** And the results are superb. We can speak to each other, or sing to each other in such a way that **“with one mind and one mouth [we] glorify God”** with other believers.

*Practical Application: Receive One Another, 7*

**“<sup>7</sup> Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”** Aren’t you grateful for the way that the Lord Jesus invited you into His family? On the cross of Calvary, He paid the price for your wicked heart and wicked deeds. He died to change your destiny – separation from God for eternity. In His death, the Son of God was separated from the Father by your sin. But He died and rose again to be restored to life with the Father and mankind. And now He offers you salvation full and free. **“ . . . as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”** (John 1:12). This is why we often feel closer to other believers than to our own flesh and blood. We have been made brothers and sisters by the precious blood of Christ. So let there be no hindrance: receive each other in order to magnify the unique excellence of our God.

**Intersections 15:8-12 – Where you meet the God who planned it all, 8-12**

Have you had this experience while you were driving? You were making your way down a narrow country road, only to come to a stop sign at a major thoroughfare. You were looking at lanes of traffic on either side of a median, and the traffic was really moving. To keep moving, you had to enter the nearest lane of that highway and start moving with the traffic. And once you start speeding ahead, you marveled at the foresight of the civic planners who laid out that highway. That experience illustrates this passage. Meet the God who planned for you to be filled with joy and peace.

■ **Long ago, God promised you that you would be able to live in harmonious joy with other believers. 9-12**

- God did this so that the Gentiles (the nations) could magnify the unique excellence of God's mercy. 9a

**"<sup>9</sup> And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy;"**

The God of the Bible – the one true God – is unique among all the imaginary man-made gods. In the words of Micah 7:18, **"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth *in* mercy."** Our God delights in pardoning iniquity and showing us His mercy. With this phrase in Romans 15:9, we learn that our Father planned it all! Our great God planned this magnificent highway of mercy. He did so in order that we could praise His unique excellence.

- God did this by giving us promises and prophecies. 9b-12

**" . . . as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. <sup>10</sup> And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. <sup>11</sup> And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. <sup>12</sup> And again, Esaias [Isaiah] saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."**

If you want to find the courage to patiently endure your problems and trials, start right here: **"It is written!"** (Consider the way Jesus used this phrase in Matthew 4:4-10 in His battle against Satan.)

In order, Paul quoted from the following Old Testament passages:

- ❖ 2 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:49
- ❖ Deuteronomy 32:43
- ❖ Psalm 117:1
- ❖ Isaiah 11

Take some time this week to consider these: they were written as promises to us. As New Testament believers, as part of a New Testament congregation, this was for us. All along, God was planning the New Testament church to set the solitary in families (Psalm 68:6). He gave them to us so that we could express God's unique excellence by the way we live our lives. But was it enough for God to merely make those promises to us? His mighty deeds meet your greatest needs.

■ **God fulfilled His promises to us through Jesus Christ, His Son and Servant. 8**

**"<sup>8</sup> Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:"**

It is one thing to make promises; it is quite another to fulfill them. God showed us His faithfulness by fulfilling His promises in Christ. When Paul referred to this fulfillment in 2 Corinthians 1:19-24, he commented, **"We are helpers of your joy!"** God said what He meant; God meant what He said. So now when we sing, **"Great Is Thy Faithfulness,"** we can glorify God with one mind and one mouth.

## **Intersection 15:13 – Where you meet the God of hope who fills you with all joy and peace**

Have you found yourself on “Needy Street,” rather than “Easy Street?” Sadness, despair, hopelessness, helplessness, discouragement and disunity can all seem like dead end streets. You wish you could overflow with hope to help others, but you feel empty. Let’s meet at the intersection of Romans 15:13:

**“<sup>13</sup> Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost [Spirit].”**

This is where the majesty of God’s glory intersects your story. The God of hope meets you right there in your place of despair. Verses 5-13 speak of God the Father (vs. 6), God the Son (vs. 5-8) and God the Spirit<sup>i</sup> (vs. 13). When we sing “Holy, Holy, Holy” with the words “blessed Trinity,” we glorify God’s unique excellence. Meet the God who planned for you to be filled with joy and peace.

*Practical application: Pray that the God of hope will fill others with joy and peace*

*Practical application: Let God’s Spirit fill you with hope that overflows into the lives of others*

### **Discussion questions for our Family Fellowship Groups:**

How can we be more likeminded toward one another, to go forward in spiritual harmony?

How have others helped you to find a sense of belonging here?

What can we, as a congregation, do to glorify God in a more excellent manner?

Who will give a testimony about how the promises of God helped him or her find greater joy?

At which intersections (of “Your Story” and “God’s Glory”) have you learned to better understand the Lord and trust Him?

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### **<sup>i</sup> The Work of the Holy Spirit**

- We were born again by the Spirit of God (Titus 3:5-6).
- God’s Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are truly God’s children (Romans 8:16).
- We have fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- We can have the joy of the Spirit, even in trials (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
- The Holy Spirit sealed us until the Day of Redemption (Ephesians 4:30).
- We can pray in the Spirit (Jude 20).
- We can progressively grow to be more like the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 3:18).
  - o So it would be unwise to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30), or quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).
  - o Instead, let us bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).