

# Briefing Doc: Romans 15:14

For the message, "Let Us Disciple One Another" given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on May 4, 2025

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*This is a fun AI generated briefing document (edited) to help you process and reflect upon what we learned in our study together of this passage*

**Summary:** Romans 15:14 is a powerful affirmation of the Roman believers' spiritual capacity for mutual discipleship with one another. The Apostle Paul expresses confidence that they are "full of goodness," "filled with all knowledge," and critically, "able to instruct one another." The ability to instruct one another stems from their moral character (goodness) and their understanding of God's truth (knowledge), enabling them to offer gentle, constructive guidance rooted in the gospel.

## Key Themes and Important Ideas:

### 1. Three Essential Qualities for Mutual Discipleship:

- **Full of goodness:** This refers to a moral character shaped by the Holy Spirit and rooted in Christ-like character. While recognizing humanity's total depravity by nature (Romans 3), the transformation by Christ enables believers to genuinely possess and display goodness through the work of the Spirit. As the sermon notes, "The Holy Spirit begins working goodness in us so that we become more and more like Jesus." This is not perfection, but a consistent orientation toward what is right and loving.
- **Filled with all knowledge:** This is likely speaking against a heresy known as Gnosticism that taught the need for a secret knowledge to become truly spiritual. The Apostle encourages these Christians in Rome that they already know what they need to know to be able to teach one another, namely the gospel of Jesus and his calling for us to love one another. "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him..." (2 Peter 1:3). The scriptures themselves are "profitable for teaching... that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16).
- **Able to instruct one another:** This is the practical outflow of goodness and knowledge. Paul is confident in their capacity for this mutual ministry. They are fully capable of building one another up.

### 2. Understanding "Instruct One Another" (noutheteō):

- The root meaning is "to place in the mind."
- The Greek word *noutheteō* is consistently highlighted as key to understanding the verse. It is often translated as "admonish," "warn," or "counsel." This word signifies more than just formal teaching or information transfer. It involves coming alongside with truth and love, carrying a sense of gentle, constructive guidance.
- Paul himself modeled this, "I did not shrink from giving you the whole counsel of God... I did not cease night or day to admonish you with tears." (Acts 20:27, 31, quoted in sermon and slides)

### 3. Mutual Ministry as a Communal Responsibility:

- A central theme is that instruction is not reserved for leaders or a select few (something reserved only for apostles, elders, or professional teachers), but is a shared responsibility for the entire community.
- Healthy churches are described as mutual communities of formation, where disciples make disciples. "very believer has something valuable to contribute."

#### **(4) The Context of Love, Relationship, and Gospel:**

- Mutual instruction must occur within a "relational context" of love, trust, and humility. Goodness and trust create a safe space for growth.
- Instruction should always be rooted in Scripture and the gospel. It is "Gospel-Centered Guidance" that aligns with God's truth.
- Instructing one another involves not just give good advice or thoughts for improvement. Always point each other to Christ!
- The gospel is foundational: "The gospel is not just the A-B-C's but the A-Z of Christianity." (Tim Keller). It provides the basis for this mutual ministry.

#### **1. Challenges to Passive Christianity and the Need for Community:**

- The verse challenges a passive model of church where people only receive ministry.
- Christianity is "inherently a relational spirituality."
- Lone Christians are vulnerable: "lone Christians are dead Christians and easily picked off."
- Personal insight and growth are "a product of community." We need others to see ourselves clearly, using "the mirror of God's Word" (Paul David Tripp).
- "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors, there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14).

#### **Conclusion:**

Romans 15:14 serves as a vital reminder that God has equipped believers with the goodness and knowledge needed to build up one another in faith. The call to "instruct one another" is a mutual, relational, and gospel-centered practice essential for a thriving Christian community. It shifts the focus from passive reception to active participation, where every member plays a crucial role in mutual encouragement, guidance, and spiritual growth. Embracing this mutual ministry transforms a collection of individuals into a vibrant, interdependent body of Christ that glorifies God.