

# THE IMPORTANCE OF GODLY CONFIDENCE

ROMANS 15:13-33

## INTRODUCTION:

*James Dobson tells of a friend of his during their days in medical school. One day this man was walking across campus laden with books and briefcase. He passed by a fast food stand, and ordered something to eat and a milkshake to wash it down. He balanced it all on top of his briefcase and began looking for an empty table at which to sit. While looking, the milkshake got the better of him, and he bent down without looking in order to take a sip from the straw. The straw missed his mouth and ended up in his nose. Embarrassed, but not at a loss, he thought that if he straightened up the straw would stay in the shake. But when he lifted his head, the straw came out of the shake and remained in his nose, dripping the milkshake down the front of his suit. In a moment, all his confidence evaporated.*

If there was ever a man in ministry that could have lost his confidence it was the Apostle Paul. It seemed at every turn in ministry there were those who would challenge him and even try to put him to death. When many a man would have given up and quite Paul continued his divine journey with all the Godly confidence that he could muster in the power of the Holy Spirit. As he concludes his letter to the Romans we see some of that confidence. But it is important that we recognize that his confidence was most usually shown toward others. The true sign of a servant of the Lord.

14 Now ***I myself am confident*** concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, ***I have written more boldly to you*** on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God,

16 ***that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles***, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore ***I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus*** in the things which pertain to God.

18 For ***I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me***, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient--

19 in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum ***I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.***

20 And so ***I have made it my aim to preach the gospel***, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation,

21 but as it is written: "To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand."

***22 For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you.***

V. 22 Paul's Plans Were Perplexing - Paul tells the Romans that he has been trying to come to see them but that he has been "hindered." This word means "to be cut into." Paul is saying that every way he turned, his path to Rome had been cut off. This was a constant state of affairs with Paul, Rom. 1:13. 1 Thes. 2:18 tells us that he was hindered by the devil. Acts 16:6-8 says that Paul had been hindered by the Holy Spirit. When he finally made it to Troas, he discovered God's leading and found his path through life.

***23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you,***

V. 23 Paul's Plans Were Precise - In verse 23, Paul tells us that he "has no more place in these parts." He doesn't mean they have run him off. He doesn't even mean that all the work is done and all the sinners are saved. All he is saying is that he has finished his assignment. Remember, Paul was a man who laid foundations, v. 20, 1 Cor. 3:10.

He has accomplished his purposes and now it is time to move on. Notice that he also has plans to go to Rome, v. 23. Paul is a man who lays out some plans and follows them!

**24 whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while.**

V. 24 Paul's Plans Were Pursued - Paul describes the confidence he has in his plans. He knows that there will be a day when they will work out. He is hindered now, but he doesn't get excited about it. He merely yields to the Lord's work in his life and trusts God to work it all out in the end.

There is a great lesson here if we will allow ourselves to see it. The lesson is this: there is a vast difference between our immediate plans and our ultimate plan. Our immediate plans are those things we plan to do today, or in the future. They are what we plan to do. Now, there will be times when those plans become disrupted. When they do, we need to learn not to get excited. It may be that the Lord has intervened in our lives for His own reasons. This was Paul's problem. In his immediate plans, he wanted to go to Rome, but that plan had repeatedly been hindered. However, that fact did not change his ultimate plan. Paul's ultimate plan was to tell men about Jesus wherever he was at any given time.

25 But now **I am going** to Jerusalem to minister to the saints.

V. 25 The Purpose Of Grace - Paul says that he is traveling to Jerusalem to "minister" to the saints. He wants to be a blessing to the believers in that beleaguered church. Why? Paul remember where his faith started! He had been saved as a result of the work and influence of the Jerusalem church. Even though when he had first been saved, they hadn't embraced him right away, even though his motives had been questioned by those saints, Acts. 9, Paul felt an obligation to be a blessing to those people.

**26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.**

V. 26 The Purpose Of Giving - This verse tells us that the Gentile believers where Paul had been ministering had received an offering for the struggling saints in Jerusalem. The fact is, the people in Jerusalem were suffering in a terrible fashion. The other saints around the world heard of their plight and received an offering to ease their misery.

***27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.***

V. 27 The Purpose Of Gratitude - Paul says that the Gentiles gave of their material wealth because the saints in Jerusalem had given of their spiritual wealth. Here is a spiritual principle that many people do not like: If you have received a spiritual blessing from a ministry, you owe that ministry a material blessing! This is especially true of your local church where you are strengthened and fed in the things of God. You have a duty to render to this church those things that are required to meet the needs of this ministry! Note these other verses that support this idea, Gal. 6:6; 1 Thes. 5:17-18. The idea is that the moment you hear the Gospel, you are in debt. First, you are indebted to God Who made it all possible and you owe Him your faith. Secondly, you are indebted to those who made it possible for you to hear the Gospel. Sadly, many aren't discharging their debt to the church, but are forcing the few to carry the burden of many! Shame on anybody who will hold back their giving from the house of God!

***28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.***

V. 28 A Powerful Mission - In verse 28, Paul seems obsessed with getting to Spain? Why? Two reasons. One, it was the intellectual center of the world in Paul's day. Two, It represented the furthestmost extent of the Roman Empire in Paul's day. To him, it was the "uttermost part of the earth." Paul was merely obsessed with the mission of Christ. He wanted to preach the Gospel wherever it had never been preached. He wanted all those brilliant minds in Spain to hear the Word, be converted, and be used of God to spread the Gospel for the glory of God.

Would to God that the flame which burned in Paul's heart for the lost take hold of you and me! Would to God we would become overwhelmed with the idea that men were perishing. Would to God we would become consumed with the Gospel to the point that we would determine to tell everyone we met what Jesus can do for a lost sinner.

***29 But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.***

V. 29 A Powerful Motive - Paul says that when he journeys and when he preaches, he does so with divine blessing upon his life. He is saying that everywhere he travels, the presence of the Lord goes with him to aid him and to empower him. Therefore, he can carry out the work of Christ with absolute confidence in the Lord's power and promises.

***30 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,***

***31 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,***

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

***33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.***  
(Ro 15:14-33).