

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY FORTY-ONE

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16

The church is a family. It's a place where people speak words that are reliable, demonstrate faith that is invincible, model grace that is tangible, and express affection that is demonstrable. Or it should be.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

How beautiful, good, and pleasant is a family where love and genuine affection flourish! Words of affirmation build character and speak acceptance. Hugs bring comfort and straighten our walk, and kisses communicate warmth and fondness. This kind of family is a refreshing spring.

The church was designed to be a close family where the weak and the strong feel accepted, not an impersonal institution or a place of partisan politics and prejudice. Christ intended His church to be a warm body for the lonely, a safe resort for those who are struggling, and a community of faith where people can be seen and loved.

The church is invincible because of Christ's power—"I will build my church," Jesus said, "and all the powers of hell will not conquer it" (Matthew 16:18). The church is *attractive* because of His love. "Just as I have loved you, you should love each other," Jesus commanded His disciples, and then He added, "Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:34–35). Love and true affection set apart the church as Christ's body and make it a refreshing spring to quench the parched soul.

So, as we navigate this new era of advanced technology and streamlined business models, we must never forget that the defining characteristic of Christ's disciples must always be *love for one another*.

Paul's greetings in the final chapter of Romans reflect Christ's love that marked Paul's ministry. In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll explore his list of greetings toward the women and men in the Roman Christian community so we can learn the value of love and genuine affection in the body of Christ.



Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Reflect on David’s celebration of the beauty, the goodness, and the pleasantness of unity among the people of God in *Psalms 133*. Express your gratitude for belonging to the family of God. Then, ask the Lord to make His Word personal as you dive into Romans so that your love for your brothers and sisters will grow more and more.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In Romans 12–16, Paul plays a recurring melody of love, revealing love’s central place in the family of God. Listen to the refrains of Paul’s “love” chorus:

- “Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them” (Romans 12:9).
- “Love each other with genuine affection” (12:10).
- “Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another” (13:8).
- “Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God’s law” (13:10).
- “If another believer is distressed by what you eat, you’re not acting in love if you eat it” (14:15).

He concludes on a climactic note: “Accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory” (15:7, emphasis added). How is God glorified when we love one another?

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16



Observation: Paul's Greetings to His Friends

Paul showed his love to his friends in Rome by writing a personal greeting to each person. Peruse the names and Paul's comments about each person in *Romans 16:1–16*.¹ What initial impressions stand out as you read this impressive list?

Names reveal a lot about people. Paul's list includes Greek, Latin, and Hebrew names, and they are both male and female names. Some were names of slaves and others, perhaps, of royalty. What a beautiful blend of sexes, ages, races, and social classes—all knit together in worship of Christ!

Persons Mentioned by Name

Reread *Romans 16:1–16* and count the names. How many people did Paul mention? What shows you that these people mattered to him?

These are people who meant something to Paul. You know what I think? I think they're Paul's prayer list. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16

Titles Added to the Names

Notice the titles Paul included with several of the names in *Romans 16:1, 3, 5, 7, and 12*. Fill in the titles for these friends.

Titles of Some of Paul's Friends Romans 16:1–16 (NASB)		
Phoebe	<i>16:1</i>	
Priscilla and Aquila	<i>16:3</i>	
Epenetus	<i>16:5</i>	
Andronicus and Junia	<i>16:7</i>	
Tryphena and Tryphosa	<i>16:12</i>	
Persis	<i>16:12</i>	

What does this list communicate about Paul's relationship with his friends and their vital roles?

This isn't just a list. These are people who are respected and loved. They mean something to the writer. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Greetings and Affection Expressed

Now look for the references to "greeting" and "commending" in *Romans 16:1–16*. What words indicate Paul's emotion or affection?

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16

*In the early church, it was common—and still is common in the Middle East—for there to be a kiss on the cheek. Paul says, “Keep it up.”
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



Interpretation: Servanthood and Genuine Affection in the Body of Christ

Explore what *Romans 16:1–16* means by taking the step of interpretation, using Bible lexicons, dictionaries, and other resources to understand what Paul was saying to the original readers.

Having observed the different types of people listed by Paul, we discover the first principle that *the body of Christ has variety in unity*. Explain the meaning of the concept “variety in unity” and its significance to each believer.

There are so many different types of people. There are singles, of course, as well as couples. There are households, as well as widows, named here. Look at these names. “Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Paul mentioned Phoebe, “who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea” and who “has been helpful to many” (Romans 16:1–2). Look up the Greek verb *diakonos*, translated “deacon,” at billmounce.com. He also greeted Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa (twins, perhaps), and Persis who “worked so hard for the Lord” (16:6, 12). How do these phrases demonstrate that *the body of Christ has servants in obscurity*?

Servanthood represents one thing: hard work. Slaves of ancient days and servants of today are known for one thing—not notoriety, not a role of significance in the eyes of the general public—work. Again and again, you will read of hard work. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16

Paul mentioned Aquila and Priscilla in [Romans 16:3–4](#). To discover more about this key couple in the growth of the early church, read the article, “[Aquila and Priscilla](#)” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at [biblegateway.com](#). How would you characterize their lives? How do their lives show that the body of Christ has esteem in humility?

Guard against any self-praise. Servants don't brag on themselves or their work.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Cultivating Servanthood and Mutual Affection

Correlation helps us grasp what other Scriptures say about servanthood and mutual affection. A servant heart is a humble heart. Compare [Proverbs 27:2](#); [Romans 16:1–16](#); and [1 Corinthians 4:1–7](#). What do all three passages, especially the passage about the lives of Aquila and Priscilla, teach about cultivating servanthood?

Be like Priscilla and Aquila. They didn't even have business cards. They just risked their necks for Paul. The great exploits for Christ are never known and never make the headlines. They never appear on brass plaques or on statues.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Whether we look at Jesus washing His disciples' feet, the apostle Paul saying goodbye to the Ephesian elders, or these elders crying on his neck in [John 13:1–14](#) and [Acts 20:25–38](#), love and genuine affection bubble up as a refreshing spring in the church. What insight do you glean from Jesus, Paul, and the Ephesian elders in how Christians can demonstrate love to one another?

We're a lonely, broken, and struggling body of people, and it's the best-kept secret in the midst of the church. Let down your guard. Reach out to one another.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16



Application: Become a Servant! Demonstrate Your Love!

To help apply the principles we discovered, Pastor Chuck Swindoll shares an A, B, C, D memory aid to list ways to show genuine affection to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

A—Accept the variety. In what ways might you be able to show acceptance toward believers who are different from you?

B—Become a servant. Can you think of even small ways you might be able to serve humbly someone in need this week?

Work on servanthood. If you wonder what a good project would be for this year, take servanthood. Serve behind the scenes. Serve without calling attention to it. Serve without keeping a record. Just serve. Just give, just serve, become a servant. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

C—Cultivate esteem for others in the body. Did you notice how Paul crafted a specific affirmation with each person? Pick someone to encourage in your church family. When you see this person, in what specific way can you affirm him or her?

D—Demonstrate your love. Thank God for the opportunities He will offer you this week to apply these principles.

Love and Kisses

Romans 16:1–16

In Paul's day, giving one another a kiss on the cheek was an appropriate sign of friendship. Instead of a kiss, we can honor our Christian brothers and sisters in our day in ways that communicate an equal degree of warmth as a kiss communicated in ancient times. A smile, a handshake, a word of appreciation—all say that we're glad to be with the other person. Everyone is welcome in the family of God . . . *and loved.*



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for rescuing me and giving me a new spiritual family. Teach me how to love those who are kind and those who are not kind. Help me to love others the way You love me. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2008, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

insight.org

Insight for Living
Study 41 • Page 8