

**I. Introduction and review.** *The best laid plans of mice and men...*

**II. Paul's plans. v. 22-29**

**A. Paul plans to (finally) visit Rome. v. 22-23,29**

1. For many years he has longed to visit them. v. 23b 1:11,15
2. He hasn't yet come because he had other priorities. v. 20-23 1:13
3. Now that his pioneering work is done in this region, he plans to visit them. v. 23
4. He anticipates mutual encouragement and blessing. v. 24b,29, 32 1:13

**B. Paul plans to use his visit to Rome as a stepping stone to Spain. v. 24, 28b-29**

1. Paul is still focused upon pioneering missions work.
2. Paul hopes the church in Rome will *help* send him on this proposed fourth missionary journey. Acts 15:3 I Co. 16:6 II Co. 1:16 Titus 3:13 III John 1:6
3. Exactly what kind of help did Paul expect? Acts 15:3 13:1f
4. Is the church in Rome merely a secondary objective for Paul? v. 29,32

**C. Before Paul can go to Rome, he must first visit Jerusalem. v. 25-27**

1. What could be so important as to delay Paul's plans to visit Rome and Spain
2. Paul has long been working to collect an offering from the Gentile churches to relieve the poverty of the believers in Jerusalem. I Co. 16:1-4 II Co. 8:1-9:15
3. The importance of this offering goes far beyond the material aid, which is why Paul leads a delegation from the Gentile churches to Jerusalem. I Co. 16:3-4

**D. Why are these gifts so important?**

1. These gifts are a symbol of the unity Jewish and Gentile believers enjoy in Christ. 10:12 11:17 Eph. 2:14,18 4:4 Ga. 3:28
2. The Gentiles ought to share material blessings with the Jews, in whose spiritual blessings they now share. v. 27b 11:11,17-20 1:16 4:13-16 15:7-8 Is. 2:3 John 4:22
3. These gifts will confirm the fruit God has produced among the Gentiles through Paul. v. 28 Isa. 2:2-3 45:14 60:5f

**E. Paul's hope is to come to Rome after his mission to Jerusalem has succeeded so that he can be refreshed and prepared to go on to Spain. v. 28-29**

**III. Principles for planning.**

**A. Making plans for the future is good and biblical. Pr. 21:5 Luke 14:28**

**B. Your plans should be based upon God's revealed will. 15:8-12,20-21 Acts 9:15 Ga. 2:9**

1. Paul's plans were based upon the revelation he received from God.
2. God's infallible and all sufficient Word guides us. II Ti. 3:16 Ps. 119:105 II Pe. 1:3
3. Where the Bible is clear, no further guidance is needed.

**C. Often you will have to apply the general principles of God's Word to particular situations.**

1. Paul did not always receive special revelation telling him what to do next.
2. You too must become accustomed to making wise choices.
3. Seek godly counsel. Pr. 15:22 12:15 19:20
4. Don't put out fleeces, expect special revelation, or rely upon your feelings. Judges 6:36-40 Pr. 14:12

- D. Submit your plans to God's sovereign will. Js. 4:13f Pr. 16:9**
1. Paul's plan did not turn out exactly as he had hoped. Acts 21:1f 28:15
  2. Well intentioned plans of godly men sometimes fail.
  3. God is in complete control of all plans. Js. 4:15 Pr. 16:9 Pr. 21:1
  4. Do you really want God's will, no matter what? Lu. 22:42 Mt. 6:10 Acts 18:21
  5. God's plan is the best of all possible plans. 8:28 Eph. 1:11

#### **IV. Principles for giving.**

- A. Meeting the needs of poor believers is a priority in giving. v. 26**
1. Concern for the poor was a hallmark of the early church. 12:13 Acts 2:42f 4:32f 6:1f Ga. 2:10 Js. 1:27 2:14f Heb. 13:16 I Jo. 3:17 II Co. 8:13-15 Pr. 19:17 Ex. 16:18
  2. God sometimes allows real Christians to suffer great poverty. II Co. 8:2
  3. God allows poverty for good reasons. 8:28 Acts 11:27
  4. God wants believers to unite in love through meeting one another's needs: True Christian fellowship (*koinonia*). 12:13 II Co. 8:4 Ga. 6:6 He. 13:16
  5. While we should be concerned about all who are suffering, we should be especially concerned for other Christians. Ga. 6:10
  6. Our concern should not be limited to those in our own church, or even our own nation. We should share the burdens of believers throughout the world.
  7. Giving should have a spiritual purpose.
- B. You should also share material blessings with those from whom you have received spiritual blessings. v. 27b Luke 8:1-3 I Co. 9:11-14 Ga. 6:6-10 Phil. 1:5 4:15 I Ti. 5:17**
1. Paul never solicits money for himself but does receive gifts from churches in which he has ministered. I Co. 9:15f Phi. 1:5 4:15 II Co. 11:8-9
  2. It is right for us to share with those who bless us spiritually. I Co. 9:11f I Ti. 3:15
  3. Do we have an ongoing debt to the Jews?
- C. Giving to the Lord's work is both a duty and a pleasure. v. 26a**
1. A duty can be sincerely and joyfully performed.
  2. The Gentiles believers owed a debt to the Jews (and to God). v. 27 II Co. 8:9
  3. You can never give so much to make God owe you.
  4. The Gentile believers were delighted to give. II Co. 8:1-5,8 9:7
  5. God's people should never have to be pressured or manipulated into giving.
  6. Are you a cheerful giver? II Co. 9:7
- D. How much should you give?**
1. God does not need your gift. 11:33-35 Ps. 50:10
  2. Give generously (sacrificially). 12:8 II Co. 9:5-6 8:2,9 Luke 6:38 II Chron. 24:11 Mark 12:41-44 You don't have to be rich to give a lot. Mark 12:41-44 II Co. 8:2f
  3. Give proportionately and regularly. I Co. 16:1-2 II Co. 8:3,11b-15 Pr. 3:9
- E. Giving to the Lord's work is a blessing.**
1. Your willingness to give to the poor and to the Lord's work is proof of God's work in your life.
  2. God uses your gifts to further the gospel and to unite believers in love.
  3. You will be blessed. II Co. 9:10-11
  4. Your giving is sacred worship. v. 27b The ultimate goal of giving is not the meeting of human need, but the glory of God. II Co. 9:12-15

#### **V. Concluding applications.**

### Discussion questions

1. Why hadn't Paul visited Rome?
2. Why is he now able to come to Rome?
3. Why does Paul want to come to Rome?
4. Why is it important for Paul to go to Jerusalem first?
5. What place does planning have in the life of a believer?
6. How does God's revealed will influence our planning?
7. How does God's sovereign will influence our planning?
8. To whom should you give?
9. Why should you give?
10. How much should you give?
11. What blessings result when you give?