

Title: Ten To One - Romans 15 14-21

Read:

¹⁴⁻¹⁶Personally, I've been completely satisfied with who you are and what you are doing. You seem to me to be well-motivated and well-instructed, quite capable of guiding and advising one another. So, my dear friends, don't take my rather bold and blunt language as criticism. It's not criticism. I'm simply underlining how very much I need your help in carrying out this highly focused assignment God gave me, this priestly and gospel work of serving the spiritual needs of the non-Jewish outsiders so they can be presented as an acceptable offering to God, made whole and holy by God's Holy Spirit. ¹⁷⁻²¹Looking back over what has been accomplished and what I have observed, I must say I am most pleased—in the context of Jesus, I'd even say proud, but only in that context. I have no interest in giving you a chatty account of my adventures, only the wondrously powerful and transformingly present words and deeds of Christ in me that triggered a believing response among the outsiders. In such ways I have trailblazed a preaching of the Message of Jesus all the way from Jerusalem far into northwestern Greece. This has all been pioneer work, bringing the Message only into those places where Jesus was not yet known and worshiped. My text has been, Those who were never told of him— they'll see him! Those who've never heard of him— they'll get the message!

Think:

“All they ever do is nag me. Nag nag nag.” The number of times I said that about my parents when I was growing up is unbelievable. It seemed to me that my parents just kept pointing out the things that were wrong. I left my clothes on the floor, I didn't wash my plate up. They seemed to completely miss that I had spent the entire day at school and then come home and spent two hours doing homework. That's how we are sometimes with people, particularly with people we love. And actually, I guess, I could only see the things I believed my parents were doing wrong. I too missed the fact that they had been out at work all day long, and then come home and washed and cooked for me. When it comes down to it both my parents and I were pretty rubbish at encouraging each other. Paul has spent most of this letter telling the guys in Rome what to change and finally, he is getting towards the end and he says “oh by the way, actually you are doing pretty good.” A friend of mine gave me a better way of delivering criticism. When you look at someone, think of them with one of those life bars above their head. You know the type of thing you see in a computer game. You have to make sure that their life bar is full before you give them constructive criticism. You have to give them ten energy packs of encouragement so their life bar is full. Then and only then can you give them one bomb of constructive criticism. Only when you encourage them ten times beforehand, will the bomb not destroy them. So remember ten to one and they will live.

Pray:

Lord help me encourage others ten times as much as I point out their failures. Amen.

Action:

So who needs their life bar topping up that you know? Ring them or walk up to them and tell them how well they are doing. Do it today. Bye.