*divING DEEPER* **Discussion Guide**

**TEXT SUMMARY**

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Paul’s letter to the believers in Rome opens like a letter, in warm, personal language to his friends in the church there. From the middle of the first chapter until the middle of the fifteenth chapter, Paul lays out his magnificent explanation of what God has given us in Christ.

Our text comes in the middle of the fifteenth chapter, as Paul reverts back to his warm, conversational style to give his greetings to his friends in Rome.

As he closes his letter, Paul commends the church in Rome for three traits:

* ***Their sterling character:*** *they were “full of goodness.”*
* ***The depth of their insight and understanding:*** *they were “filled with all knowledge.”*
* ***Their capacity to instruct one another***

**INTRODUCTION** (observation):

All three of Paul’s observations about the church in Rome are couched in the language of superlatives: “full of goodness… filled with all knowledge… able (lit. supremely able) to instruct one another.”

**READING**

Before you read the text (**Romans 15:14**), scan through chapters 14-15, where Paul shows what “one-anothering” looks like when a congregation must deal with controversies over secondary matters (in their case, whether believers may consume meat that had been dedicated to pagan deities).

**DISCUSSION** (interpretation):

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*What do these cross-references tell us about what Paul means when he commends the church in Rome so highly?*

*1. Galatians 5:22*

*2. Hebrews 5:12-14*

*3. 1 Corinthinans 8:1*

*4. Colossians 3:16*

*5. Hebrews 10:24-25*

**SO WHAT?** (application)

It’s not easy to see an “application” in a text that contains no commands and no promises*.* This text does, however, sound familiar: The fellowship of Patterson Park Church is similar to the church in first century Rome in the two strengths Paul mentions (their character and their knowledge) and in their capacity to counsel and instruct and admonish one another.

The sermon closes with an invitation for mature believers to

1. begin to pray about investing in the life of a younger believer

2. read some of the great books on how to disciple someone:

* *Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman
* *Discipling* by Mark Dever
* *The Lost Art of Disciple-making* by Leroy Eims
* *Multiply* by Francis Chan
* *Organic Discipleship* by Macullum and Lowery

… and for young believers to begin to pray that God would bring into their lives a mature believer with the capacity and the willingness to invest in their lives.