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“To God’s Beloved: Paul’s Letter to the Romans”

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### **Session 9: Wise in What Is Good**

Welcome to our last session, Session 9 in our study of Paul’s letter to the Romans. I truly hope—and actually I trust—that this won’t be the last time you open Romans to study it, whether or not it’s with the same group, and that this set of introductory chapters has drawn you into the letter to the Romans with curiosity and excitement about what Paul is trying to share, if not with always perfect clarity.

This last chapter, Chapter 16, is a kind of interesting place to end because it becomes so deeply real again all of a sudden. As you read this chapter, you will see that many, many people that Paul knew and believed to be in Rome, people that he may actually have worked with in previous places around the Mediterranean, are addressed by name and often highlighted by what they’ve done with Paul or for the Gospel apart from Paul. Paul you will see at his network-building best. He is putting those names out there to say, these people whom I think you know have all had something to do with spreading this good news about Jesus, the good news of blessing for Jews and for Gentiles. So, wonderful networking that goes on here.

And for those of you who come to this with questions about Paul’s connection to women and how he felt about them, Chapter 16 in Romans will be one of the most reassuring things you ever get to read. Women’s names are woven right in there along with men. They are highlighted as servants of the Gospel, equal to Paul himself. There is a great positive spirit for all of us as we see people being named, whose names we would otherwise never know, women and men who have served long and with diligence to bring the Good News all the way to Rome. It’s a good place to end, because we could write our own names into Chapter 16 and think about our roles and how people might describe us as holy, hospitable servants of God for the sake of the Gospel. So enjoy Chapter 16 for what it is, a touch of reality where Paul’s feet hit the ground again.