

**Gathering Question:** Raise your hand if you played an instrument in band in High School. Try to guess what instrument each person played.

## **Live In Harmony With One Another**

If you ever have the opportunity to be a part of a musical group, you will discover the meaning of the word “dissonance.” Dissonance occurs when two notes are played together but they do not sound good together. In fact, the resulting sound is sometimes very unpleasant and grating.

Harmony is something quite different. Harmony occurs when one or more notes are played that sound good together. Somehow the sounds fit each other and what results is very pleasing to the ear.

There is another word you discover if you are involved in music – unison. Unison sometimes sounds good but most of the time it can be rather boring. It means that everyone plays the exact (and I do mean exact) same notes. The goal of unison is to sound like only one instrument is playing or one voice is singing.

It’s interesting that when Paul takes up the musical metaphor in Romans 12, that he uses the word “harmony.” You might suspect since this is a Biblical letter that he would say everyone live in unison. Play the same note, do the same things, act the same way, don’t deviate on whit. I don’t think you would expect Paul to write that we should live in dissonance, unless he was talking about the Christian life as it confronts a fallen world.

The word he uses is “harmony.” This word is pregnant with possibilities. Paul does not call for all Christians to play the same note. Incredible! It is alright to be different, as long as the note we play combines with other notes to make a pleasing sound. Did you notice, he writes, “live” in harmony? It is a life time pursuit to play your note while others play theirs, to make beautiful music for the Master to hear.

And don’t miss the last part – “with” one another. My note is always to be played with others in mind. It should be my desire to make beautiful music along with all the other notes that are being played. It is not good to want everyone else to play my note. What causes beautiful symphonies is the way that so many different notes are combined to make a powerful whole. Your note is important just as the notes of every other Christian. We are God’s favorite music. Live in Harmony with one another.

**Read:** Romans 12:16; Romans 14:1-12; 15:1, 2.

### **Discuss:**

1. Read Romans 14:1-12. Discuss what this passage has to do with harmony.
2. Why is Romans 14:9, 10, important to this discussion?
3. Read Romans 15:1, 2. Think of an occasion when you were more interested in pleasing yourself than bearing the failings of a weak person.