



# THE EXHORTER

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*“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40*

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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## JUMP START #568

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**Rom. 15:14-** *“And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.”*

Paul had to say several powerful things to the Roman Christians. They needed further instructions and they needed to put in practice what the apostle was teaching. It is easy to go to an extreme when someone is trying to help another person. Since they needed more instructions, one could conclude that they didn't know anything or that they weren't doing very well. That's not the case. This is one reason our verse is found in the midst of many instructions. It was to remind them that they were doing well, yet, they still needed instruction.

Our verse today contains three incredible statements. Together, these statements illustrate growth and maturity in Christ. It is what every Christian should be after a while. This is the dream situation for elders, to have members who manifest these three qualities. It's easy to find one or two in folks, but all three, and at the same time, that's our goal.

- **Full of Goodness-** I like how that is stated. It's more than they are good people. It's more than they are doing good things. They are full of goodness. Now we've seen the opposite—full of mischief, full of problems, full of deceit, full of pain. These Christians were full of goodness. When one is full of goodness, stand back, because good things will be happening. Good to one another, good words, good deeds, good help, good attitudes, good hearts—these are things that come out of someone who is full of goodness. These folks see others more than themselves. They are eager to help. They don't have to be told and they don't complain when there is an opportunity. You know people like this. They show up when someone needs help moving, painting, with yard work. These are the ones who are sitting with you in the hospital waiting room. These are the ones who hand someone who is struggling, an envelope with cash or gift cards in it. These are the ones who show up on a Saturday work day at the church house. These are the ones who compliment. These are the ones who smile. They are busy. Their minds swirl with ideas of how to help others. Full of goodness—a church is hopelessly stuck without these folks. Visitors notice those who are good. Goodness is attractive and a powerful means of opening the eyes of others to Jesus.

- **Filled with all Knowledge**- these Romans were “doubly” filled—first with goodness, and now with knowledge. Without knowledge to govern, set the boundaries, and stay within the guidelines of scriptures, hearts filled with goodness can go overboard and push for things that the Bible doesn’t allow. This often happens on the congregational level. Good hearts want to rush in and use the church money and just “do good.” It’s hard to put the brakes on those ideas and activities, but filled with all knowledge will. It will take us to scriptures and show us exactly what can and cannot be done. God sets patterns and those need to be followed, even when good things are the goal. Filled with all knowledge—that keeps the Bible at the forefront of things. We need biblical knowledge to lead us. It’s the teachings of the Bible that will comfort the hurting. The answers of the Bible will drive away doubt, fear, worry, and confusion. Filled with knowledge is what we want our preachers to be like. We want our Bible class teachers to be filled with knowledge.

Having knowledge but not a heart that is filled with goodness, leads only to discussions, lectures, and intellect. We become thinkers and not doers. We talk, but we don’t produce. Knowledge and goodness go together.

- **Able to admonish one another**- To admonish is to warn, teach and instruct. Here our two earlier expressions come together. Without knowledge, we can’t admonish correctly. Sure, we can give our thoughts and opinions and advice, but it may not be sound. It may not be true to what God wants. The knowledge is necessary, but so is the good heart. It is the heart that is filled with goodness that wants another person to do well. Love drives the person to speak to them, to help them, to teach them. This shows the connection and relationship that we have in a congregation. We are there for each other. We help one another.

Would you know what to say to someone? Knowledge teaches you that there is not one method nor one formula that is a “one size fits all” remedy to admonish others. Each person presents unique backgrounds, baggage and needs. Knowledge reveals that. Knowledge knows that. The widow who is struggling has different spiritual needs than the teen-ager, as does the young family, as does the mature Christian, as does the immature Christian. Often a one-size-fits-all approach to classes leaves some without answers or help. Some admonishing needs to be done one-on-one, so it can be directed, personal, and just what the person needs.

Full of goodness—full of knowledge—able to admonish one another. This is where we need to be as brethren and as congregations. It takes time and effort to get to this. It doesn’t just happen. One must fight selfish feelings, or they will never be filled with goodness. One must fight the lazy bone in us, or they will never learn. One must fight being demanding, overbearing and threatening or they will never be able to admonish.

When these three characteristics are running through our hearts, the kingdom marches on. This can be you. It can be of all Christians who walk with the Lord. Goodness—knowledge—admonishing....need this in the home, in the congregation and in our lives.

Roger Shouse

