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# Romans

**I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.**  
Romans 1:14

This verse is a tie between the previous verses which spoke of Paul's desire to come to Rome and the following three verses which lay the foundation for an intense discourse on the nature of fallen man in relation to the holy God and Creator.

Paul says that he is a "debtor to Greeks and barbarians." The term debtor speaks of one bound in the performance of their duties or by an obligation. The distinction between Greeks and barbarians is noted and would be similar to today's thought of those in the "first world" and those in the "third world." Greeks were the developers of a great and intellectual culture and therefore to them, everyone else was a lower class. The term "barbarians" is reflective of everyone who didn't participate in the Greek culture and speak the language. It comes from the sounds of non-Greek speakers "bar bar" or gibberish.

Paul claimed to be a debtor to both the high class and the low class. To him, there was only the saved and the lost and he wanted to convert as many as possible. The second distinction – the "wise and the unwise" is similar in concept because the message of the gospel cuts through the most intellectual argument and crushes the most inane. A hint of this is to be seen in 1 Corinthians 3:18-20 –

“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

Paul clearly understood this, as we all should and he therefore proclaimed the gospel in any and every way to save as many as he could. He spoke the gospel to King Agrippa and he spoke the gospel to the slave Onesimus. He spoke it at the Areopagus to the intellectually elite, and he spoke it to tradesmen and prisoners. He spoke of Jesus to Jew and he spoke of Him to gentiles. In 1 Corinthians 9, he sums up his audience for us –

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.” (19-23)

Life application: Let each of us be willing to speak the gospel message to any and all people in the manner which they are comfortable. We should use simple words to the uneducated and to children, but we should be capable of adjusting our words up when speaking to those of higher education. We need to be ready and willing to communicate properly and effectively to people of all of life’s stations about the exceedingly rich glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.