

BUILDING UP ONE ANOTHER
ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER
ROMANS 15:5-7

⁵May the God Who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:5-7

I. Why Should We Accept One Another?



Accept - (Greek Προσλαμβανω) - To welcome, receive favorably; approve of willingly; to admit into your family or friendship group as one of your own and fully support. "Accept" in this verse is in the present middle imperative tense, which means it is a continual action that we have to work on. It doesn't happen easily or automatically. It is also an urgent command, not a suggestion.

- **Accepting one another is a key to _____** – The problem with the church in Rome was that the Jewish Christians would not accept the Gentile Christians, because they were considered inferior. Various types of discrimination were rampant in society as well. By loving and accepting all equally, the Church would stand out as a powerful witness to unity. Acceptance in action would prove the Church is radically different than the rest of the world.
- **Accept one another because _____ accepted you** – Christ didn't accept us because of our color, status, wealth, age, or gender. He didn't accept us because we were more worthy or righteous than others. Christ didn't accept us because we were long-time or life-long residents of Houston or Texas County. Christ accepted us because of His love, expressed through His shed blood. There are no second class citizens in God's kingdom. All are "one" in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). Out of overwhelming gratitude to Jesus for accepting us, we must accept others.
- **Accepting one another brings _____ to God** – In a world that is non-accepting of others, divided, full of hate, and at war with itself, accepting one another and unity show the supernatural power and love of God that triumph over the sin, selfishness, and divisions of people. Our actions of love and acceptance "raise God up" and honor His greatness. Our actions bring greater praise and glory to God, more than our words.

II. Barriers to Accepting One Another

- **We don't accept because of _____** – In the Roman church, standards of behavior, other than Christian teaching, were being used to judge acceptability by the Jewish Christians. Those standards included following their version of Jewish law (symbolized by circumcision) and eating food offered to idols (Rom. 14). Today, members are judged based on personal standards of right and wrong (dress, personality, lifestyle, marital status, etc.).
- **We don't accept because of partiality and _____** – In the Roman church, the Jewish Christians would show partiality to their fellow Jews, and ignore the non-Jewish Christians (Gentiles). Today, we show favoritism when we only spend time with our long-time friends, and don't include newer members. Though you may not be consciously

practicing non-acceptance, you are non-accepting in practice. We are warned not to show favoritism (James 2:1, James 2:4, I Timothy 5:21). When we show favoritism, we sin (James 2:9).

- ***We don't accept because of _____ dislike*** – There are some people we just don't naturally like. Their personality or personal style (the way they talk or act) may drive us crazy. We avoid them physically, mentally, or emotionally. Once we decide we don't like them, we find or make up "pseudo-spiritual" reasons to reject them. What we need to realize is that God often puts people in our lives to test our love and acceptance with the spiritual opportunity to grow in love. Are you passing the test?
- ***We don't accept actively and _____*** – We actively don't accept when we purposefully use words and actions to show our disapproval and non-acceptance to that person and others (such as criticism). We passively don't accept by not having the time to get to know and love others; or not caring for their needs.

III. Practical Steps for Accepting One Another

- ***Prayerfully evaluate your attitudes and _____ toward others*** – Who are you really not accepting? Are you accepting based upon your own personal standards? Are you favoring some members over others? Why?
- ***Actively go out of your way to _____ others*** – Consciously spend time greeting those you don't normally talk to. Minimize the differences and seek common ground for fellowship and true caring. Practice the "5 minute rule" (where you don't spend time with friends and family before and after the service; only guests and members you don't know).
- ***Prayerfully evaluate your attitudes toward other Christians concerning legalism, _____, discrimination and favoritism*** – How do your views compare with the Bible?
- ***Jesus, the Master _____*** – His disciples came from diverse backgrounds: fishermen, a tax collector, a former disciple of John the Baptist (Andrew), a political zealot (Simon), and even Judas. Jesus accepted them all and taught them to accept one another. Jesus also accepted "sinners" and showed it by spending time with them and caring for them. In contrast, the Pharisees were masters of rejecting people when they didn't measure up to Pharisee standards.

Will you be a Master Acceptor?

Or

A Pharisee Rejecter?

Answers: I. Unity; Christ; praise. II. Legalism; favoritism; personal; passively. III. Actions; accept; prejudice; Acceptor.