

^Better Together^ *Accept One Another*

Romans 15:7 - *“Therefore accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God.”*

Lesson for the day: *“Since we are accepted by Christ, we must accept one another.”*

Most of us struggle with two tendencies:

- We like to compare.
- We long to control others.

We can easily fall into thinking the way we view life or the way we do things is correct, and therefore those who differ from us must be wrong.

The Road to Acceptance: A.C.C.E.P.T.

Avoid passing judgment.

Romans 14:1 – *“Accept anyone who is weak in faith, but don’t argue about disputed matters.”*

There are three categories in Scripture:

- Things that are right.
- Things that are wrong.
- Issues of freedom and preference which involve secondary matters.

We’re told not to “*argue*” over opinions.

2 Timothy 2:14 – *“...charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.”*

Here’s what they were arguing over:

Romans 14:2-3 – *“One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.”*

Romans 14:4 – *“Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.”*

Brian Bell: “Your love may be tested more by Christians who disagree with you, than by unbelievers who persecute you... Sometimes disputable matters turn us blue in the face, which makes our Christian friend see red, but Paul points out it should be gray.”

The problem is not **THAT** we disagree; it’s more about **HOW** we disagree. You don’t have to agree with someone’s opinions, but don’t look down on those whom God has accepted.

Commit to live for the Lord alone.

Romans 14:5 tells us each believer must be *“fully convinced in his own mind.”* We’re not to automatically adopt the convictions of others, but instead to give careful thought and prayerful consideration to all the principles taught in the Word of God.

Romans 14:6 – *“The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.”*

Wouldn’t it be amazing to be in a church where everyone gave each other the benefit of the doubt on differences of opinion, instead of putting the worst possible spin on everything?

Romans 14:10 – *“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”*

Our responsibility is to make sure the Lord is #1 in our lives and not to worry too much about the preferences of other people.

Control yourself in love.

Romans 14:13 – *“Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.”*

Romans 14:15 – *“For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.”*

Romans 14:17 – *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

If we major in a godly life, we won't fight over minor matters, and we won't look down on those with differing views.

Edify everyone you can.

Romans 14:19 – *“So then let us pursue what promotes peace and for mutual upbuilding.”*

Romans 14:20 – *“Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats.”*

Are you a constructor or a destructor?

Personalize your convictions privately.

The way of wisdom is to keep some things private.

Romans 14:22 – *“Whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God.”*

Treasure people like Jesus does.

Romans 15:7 – *“Therefore accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God.”*

Let's Review

- Avoid passing judgment.
- Commit to live for the Lord alone.
- Control yourself in love.
- Edify everyone you can.
- Personalize your convictions privately.
- Treasure people like Jesus does.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be accepted?
2. How do you feel when you are accepted by others?
3. What have we done for Christ to accept us? Why, then, do we expect others to meet certain standards for us to accept them?
4. Do you find yourself comparing yourself to others? Do you usually feel you are better than someone else or that they are better than you? How does this make you feel? Why do you think we do this?
5. In what ways do we try to control others or do you realize that others are trying to control you? Give some examples.
6. How can you begin to fellowship more with people who have different opinions or beliefs than you do? What may you have to do to make this work?
7. Do we need to change our beliefs on things that are biblically right or wrong? Can we still associate with people who do not believe the same on these items? Why or why not?
8. What does quarreling over things that are disputable matters accomplish? Why do we quarrel over these things?
9. Why is it important to accept people even though we disagree with them?
10. How can being at different points on our spiritual journey affect our opinions on certain things, and how might that change as we mature more in our faith?
11. Is going to someone you are concerned is straying from God's Word and talking to them about it in love the same as judging them? Why or why not? If not, how are they different?
12. Give some examples of times when we may have to limit our liberty to help another believer.
13. Has anyone done something to encourage you recently? What can you do to encourage that person in return? Who is someone else that you can encourage who seems to be discouraged or struggling right now?
14. What benefit is there to not verbalizing your opinions on certain things that are disputable matters? Should we verbalize our opinion on things that are right or wrong? Why or why not?
15. What do we need to do to treasure people the way Jesus did? What does this include?