**Is Acceptance a Dirty Word?**

**Romans 15**

**Living to Please Others**

**15 We who are strong (In faith and weak in self-reliance) must be considerate of those who are sensitive (weak in faith and strong in self-reliance) about things like this.** We **must not just please ourselves**. **2**We should **help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord**. **3**For even **Christ didn’t live to please himself**. As the Scriptures say, “The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me.” **4**Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And **the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled.**

**5**May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in **complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.** **6**Then **all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**7Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory**.

Acceptance…Definition

…the action or process of being received as adequate or suitable, typically to be admitted into a group.

Another understanding of acceptance that I would like you to consider is, as one writer put it…

“Religions and psychological treatments often suggest the path of acceptance when a situation is both disliked and unchangeable, or when change may be possible only at great cost or risk.”

Just as Christ accepted us and His sacrifice for us, so we are to accept others and the risks and costs associated with sharing our lives with them. As Paul continues…

 **8**Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. **9**He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote:

“For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles;
    I will sing praises to your name.”

**10**And in another place it is written,

“Rejoice with his people,
    you Gentiles.”

**11**And yet again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles.
    Praise him, all you people of the earth.”

**12**And in another place Isaiah said,

“The heir to David’s throne will come,
    and he will rule over the Gentiles.
They will place their hope on him.”

**13**I pray that **God, the source of hope,** will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Who are you living for?**

Others…and especially those who are more sensitive than we are

**What are you living for?**

To help others do what is right and build them up

To live in Complete harmony together

**When are you living for?**

Should be now (as accepted by God and accepting of others)

We live now as is, trusting that being accepted by God is the key to becoming

5 Things Everyone Should Know About Acceptance (Portions)

[By Megan Bruneau, M.A.](https://www.mindbodygreen.com/wc/megan-bruneau)

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1. Acceptance does not mean liking, wanting, choosing, or supporting.

No one is suggesting you like, want, or support whatever it is that you're accepting. But by struggling against the pain—by resisting and rejecting it—we create undue suffering. It doesn't mean that you've chosen or endorse what you're accepting. It doesn't mean you like your anxiety, want your chronic pain, would choose your body, or support an injustice that's happened to you or someone else.

Rather, you're choosing to allow it to be there when you can't change it in that moment. To make space for it. To give yourself permission to be as you are, feel what you feel, or have experienced what you've experienced without creating unproductive shame or anxiety. The pain might still be there, but some of the suffering will be alleviated.

2. Acceptance is an active process. It must be practiced.

It's natural to vacillate back and forth between feelings of acceptance and feelings of resistance. Make space for the spectrum of experience, and notice your internal critic get quieter.

3. Acceptance doesn't mean that you can't work on changing things.

Many people believe that acceptance is a sign of apathy. Passivity. Giving up. Relinquishing agency. However, this doesn't have to be the case. Practicing acceptance does not necessarily mean you won't be able to make a change. You can accept your body and still change it, accept your emotions and acknowledge their impermanence, and accept your behavior one day when you might change it tomorrow.

4. Acceptance doesn't mean you're accepting it's going to be that way forever.

5. We can practice acceptance toward our experience, people, appearance, emotions, ideas, and more.

Acceptance can be practiced in all areas of your life: You can exercise it toward your current experience or reality, others' beliefs or ideas, your appearance, your emotions, your health, your past, your thoughts, or other individuals.

Again, this doesn't mean you necessarily endorse whatever it is that you're accepting in these realms; rather, you recognize that you can't change the current nature of this exact moment, and accepting manages anxiety and helps calm.

I think that Jesus demonstrated this kind of acceptance as He prayed in the garden.

**42“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” 43Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. 44He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.**

**Don’t focus so much on who you could be…that it causes you to reject who you are.**

**Don’t be so focused on who someone could be, that it causes you to reject who they are.**

**“accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.”**

**Accept the times we are living in…**

Remember…As the psychotherapist Megan Bruneau said…

“…this doesn't mean you necessarily endorse whatever it is that you're accepting in these realms; rather, you recognize that you can't change the current nature of this exact moment, and accepting manages anxiety and helps calm.

Are there things you’d like to change about yourself?

Are there things you would like your spouse to change?

Your boss?

Your kids?

Your neighbor?

Your government?

Anxst and panic doesn’t help bring about positive change. When Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God, He didn’t get caught off guard, He accepted the fact that His creation defied Him. And He instituted the plan to save those who would trust Him.

The reason that He wasn’t in a panic is because He knew the end before the beginning. As Christians, it is the same reason that we have no need to panic. We know the end even in the midst of the challenges that we want God to take out of our cup.

Acceptance is a necessary step for healthy growth and change. In these last few chapters of Romans Paul has been challenging Jews to accept Gentiles and Gentiles to accept Jews, Christians who have sensitive consciences to accept those who are strong in faith and vice-versa.

The only way that we are going to help this world find Jesus is by accepting others and our circumstances the way that Jesus accepted us and His circumstances.

Ask and pray for what we think is the best…And trust God enough to say:

“Not my will, but your will be done.”

And I will leave you with the words of Paul…

**13**I pray that **God, the source of hope,** will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.