

## Acceptance

### How to earn God's acceptance.

Rom. 3:27

Col. 2:6

### We must learn to accept those who are different from us.

Matt. 9:11-12 (Every person is a unique creation of God, loved by God. If God loves everyone, shouldn't we?)

### What if a person has committed a terrible sin? Should we still accept him or her?

Rom. 8:39 (Nothing we do can separate us from God's love. In the same way, we should always love others. This does not mean that we accept or condone their sinful actions, but we love and accept others as unique and special creations of God. It is only through love that we bring a sinful person back into fellowship with God and others. Even discipline must be carried out with loving motives.)

### Determining the unacceptable.

2 Chron. 34:4

We must not accept or tolerate sin. Sin is our enemy, seeking to destroy us. If we allow any specific sin to dwell in our heart unattended, it will begin to spread like a malignant tumor, affecting all we think and do.

John 15:18-19

Rejection hurts. We all know that. Sometimes we forget, though, that we are not only on rejection's receiving end; too often we are also guilty of not accepting others.

We like and dislike others because of things that mean absolutely nothing in God's eyes. Our opinions are based on trivial, exterior details rather than on people's interior hearts. We do not take the time to get to know each other, to know enough to even realistically determine if a person is someone with whom we want to associate.

Think about it – what do we really know about the man who sits in the office two doors down from our office? When we ask him in the morning how he's doing, do we stop to listen – or do we just keep walking, barely hearing or caring about what he said? Do we just speak because it is expected, having already decided not to get too close to this person?

Of course there are some reasons why we might not want to associate too closely with an individual. But then again, before we decided to avoid someone because of their "sinfulness," maybe we should ask God how He wants us to work in that person's life. We, too, are sinners, and we must leave the judgment of others to God.

We should be careful not to judge even the people who judge us unfairly. God did not say being a Christian was going to be the easiest thing, and it is particularly not easy in a workforce full of nonbelievers- or people who believe only part of the time, at their convenience. Are we currently ostracized or not accepted by our bosses or work peers? Well, then, we can remind ourselves that Christ understands: people rejected Him too. We shouldn't be so busy thinking about our own hurt feelings that we forget that Christians are just as fallible as others.

So, check your own thoughts and actions while you are busy checking those of your coworkers. We may never change the actions of others, but as Christians we can focus on how God sees us and how He wants us to see and treat others. Nonacceptance of others is unacceptable.

Top of mind: Christ was and continues to be rejected by others. Strive for the worthiness of His acceptance, realizing that down through the years people have often judged His children unfairly. Being in the world, we also must be careful not to fall prey to that same judgmental trappings used against us. Reach out to all of your brothers and sisters in love.

Words of wisdom:

-It is OK to be different. If you are a Christian, you will not be like the others.

- Christians have historically troubled those around them. Non-Christians will never understand why you do the things you do. Pray for those who persecute you because of your beliefs.
- There is no need to try to be popular and impress others. God has given you a special gift and He wants you to live up to the potential He has created for you- whether or not your achievement is ever recognized by others.
- If God accepts you, then whether others accept you really doesn't matter in the end. Whose acceptance matters more, your coworker's for today- or God's for eternity?
- Everyone is not going to love you or even like you, especially those who do not know God.
- Melt your enemies with your warmth. Almost everybody loves the people who love them back, but Christ calls you to love those who hate you as well as those who love you.
- The mark of a true Christian is being able to accept everyone- but it's OK to accept someone while not accepting their actions and attitudes.
- Do not seek the approval of others and lose favor with God in the process. Work toward God's acceptance and approval first, or you may work against His will.
- If you have to change, hide, or hold back anything about your Christian walk, then you are wakening down a dangerous path.
- While you want others to accept you, are you accepting of them? Or are you more critical of those in the workplace than those at church? Are you more open to Christians than non-Christians? Check your acceptance level. Remember that God while God hates sin, He loves and accepts everyone.

Matt. 5:10-12

Matt. 5:43-48

Gen. 4:7

Rom. 11:15

2 Co. 8:12

1 Tim. 4:12-13

John 15:18-19

Gal. 6:9

Heb. 10:32-33

Heb. 12:3

1 John 3:13-14

John 5:41-44

John 17:7-10

Prov. 21:2-3

Rom. 15:5-7