

THE GOSPEL FOR EVERYDAY CHRISTIAN LIVING

PART SIX

8. WE MUST PREACH THE GOSPEL TO OURSELVES EVERY DAY TO FOLLOW CHRIST-LIKE ACCEPTANCE OF ONE ANOTHER.

Someone prayed: “Lord, make bad people good, and good people gracious.”

Questions:

- How do you live with other believers who believe a different doctrine than what you believe?
- How do you live with other believers who holds a different conviction than what you hold?
- ❖ **Romans 15:7**, Therefore welcome one another (accept one another, NIV) as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Context:

- ❖ **Romans 14:1-2**, Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.
- ❖ **Romans 14:5**, One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.
- ❖ **Romans 15:5-7**, May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another (accept one another, NIV) as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

“Live in harmony with one another”— Christian unity is not believing the same things; it is accepting one another despite differences.

Accept (**present imperative**) one another (**the one different from you**) as Christ has accepted you (**comparison**) for the glory of God (**the goal**).

Charles Swindoll: “Let’s allow each other the freedom to hold to convictions that are unlike our own . . . and accept them in spite of that difference.”

How did Christ accept us?

- ❖ **Romans 5:1-2**, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.”

Indisputable matters: The Gospel (Salvation by grace alone in Christ alone through faith alone)

- ❖ **Galatians 1:6-7**, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.
- ❖ **Other cardinal doctrines** (authority of Scripture, Trinity, salvation by grace alone, resurrection of the dead) and **obvious sins** (idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, lie, anger, pride, jealousy...)

Disputable matters: “Non-central doctrinal issues” (important matters but not related to salvation) and “Gray areas” (issues that are not clearly mentioned as sinful)

D A Carson: Disputable matters are “believing certain things or not believing certain things, adopting certain practices or not adopting them, does not keep a person from inheriting the kingdom of God.”

- Calvinism and Arminianism
- Complementarian and Egalitarianism
- Dispensationalism (Israel), Covenant (Law), and New Covenant (Law of Christ)
- Premillennialism, Amillennialism, Postmillennialism
- Continuism and Cessationism
- Weekly breaking bread and monthly breaking bread (inc. physical communion and online communion)
- Headcovering or non-headcovering

- Festivals or non-festivals
- Food and alcohol
- Movies/TV and non-movies/TV
- And many more

Does God love the above differing people and accept them? If so, who are you to reject them?

John Murray: “If God has received a person into the bond of his love and fellowship and if the conduct in question is no bar to God's acceptance, it is iniquity for us to condemn that which God approves. By so doing we presume to be holier than God.”

Steven Cole: We can't divorce the **fact** that He accepted us from the **way** that He accepted us. He died for us while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8). We were His enemies (Rom. 5:10). We were not seeking after Him (Rom. 3:11). He came looking for us in our lost, helpless condition (Luke 15:4). He didn't require that we clean up our lives or make vows to change or do anything to deserve His love. Like the father of the prodigal son, Jesus ran to us, embraced us, and welcomed us into His family, in spite of our smell and dirty rags! He promises (John 6:37b), “... the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” That's how we are to accept one another.

Five wise advices:

1. Keep the Gospel at the center of interpersonal relationships (no compromise)
 - **Erwin Lutzer:** “Unity, unless it is based on agreement regarding the content of the gospel, would not be worth the price.”
2. Be firm in your convictions
 - Doctrine doesn't divide us. It is we who divide ourselves because of our immaturity to live in unity despite non-central differences.
3. Be gracious towards others (accept those different from you)
 - Accepting people with differences doesn't mean affirming those differences.

- **Charles R. Swindoll:** I am fairly firm in my theological convictions, but that doesn't mean you (or anyone) must agree with me...One's theological persuasion may not bend, but one's involvement with others must.
 - **Rupertus Meldenius (1618–1648):** In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity.
4. Engage in healthy and one another sharpening conversations (without despising, quarreling)
 5. Build one another in the Lord
- ❖ **Romans 15:1-3,** We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”

We lose the sight of the gospel, we cannot accept one another as Christ has accepted us. The gospel is the core foundation of Christian unity.

What is the GOAL of accepting one another as Christ has accepted us?

Romans 15:7, “Accept (**present imperative**) one another (**the one different from you**) as Christ has accepted you (**comparison**) for the glory of God (**the goal**).”

Leon Morris puts it (The Epistle to the Romans [Eerdmans/Apollos], p. 503):
 “God’s glory was promoted when Christ received us sinners, and it is further advanced when we who are by nature sinners and wrapped up in our own concerns instead receive our brothers and sisters in Christ with warmth and love.”