

ACCEPTING THE ACCEPTED
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Romans 14:1-4

1. I believe that:
 - a. The Bible is the divinely inspired, inerrant Word of God.
 - b. The Bible is the complete Word of God.
 - c. The Bible does not contradict itself.
 - d. The Bible cannot be fully understood without the help of its author, the Holy Spirit.
 - e. The Bible is subject to misinterpretation if we do not compare Scripture with Scripture.
2. Last week we tried to answer the question, "To judge or not to judge?"
3. As we compared Scripture with Scripture we saw that we are accountable to God, to our local church, and to each other in the areas of morality, doctrine, and behavior.
4. Every church should have mature and trusted leadership that is capable of administering church discipline.
5. That said there is room for different opinions and approaches related to living life as a Christian depending on where we are in our spiritual development and understanding.
6. In this chapter Paul is dealing with the tension that existed in the early church between Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity.
7. We will examine that subject next week.
8. This morning I want to focus on accepting those whom God has accepted.
9. The people Paul was addressing were all Christians, but they held different opinions related to living the Christian life.

I. We are to accept those whom God has accepted.

- A. Paul is not talking about taking someone into the membership of the church, but accepting the fact that someone is a Christian based on his or her testimony and the evidence that they have repented towards God and embraced Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- B. The person involved may be immature, carnal, and confused, but if God has accepted them we are to accept them as well.
- C. Note Paul's clear statement in verse one and verse three, "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions...for God has accepted him."

II. We are to love those whom God has accepted.

- A. Those whom God has accepted are the beloved of the Lord.
NOTE: If you have access to a concordance take the time to read every verse in the New Testament where the word beloved is used.
 1. Paul addressed Romans, "to all who are **beloved of God** in Rome, called as saints." 1:7

2. Note two passages in Paul's letters to the Thessalonians.

a. 1 Thess 1:2-5

We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, 4 knowing, **brethren beloved by God**, His choice of you; 5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

b. 2 Thess 2:13-15

But we should always give thanks to God for you, **brethren beloved by the Lord**, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

B. The Apostles often used the word "beloved" in their letters when referring to fellow believers; even the ones they were confronting or correcting.

1. Paul wrote, "Never take your own revenge, **beloved**," (Romans 12:19) and, "Therefore, **my beloved**, flee from idolatry." (1 Corinthians 10:14)

2. James admonished, "Listen, **my beloved brethren**: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man." (James 2:5-6)

3. Peter wrote, "**Beloved**, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." (1 Peter 2:11)

4. John stated, "**Beloved**, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." (1 John 4:7)

5. Jude uses both phrases in his opening words, "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, **beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ**: 2 May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. 3 **Beloved**, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. (Jude 1-3)

C. Do we love as we are loved by God, and as the Apostles loved? 1 John 5:1-3

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and **whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him**. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

III. We are to trust God to work in the lives of those He has accepted.

A. God assumes responsibility for those He accepts.

B. All whom God has accepted are His servants, they answer to Him, and He is able to make them stand. 4

C. We all have a part to play, but we are not to play God.

APPLICATION

1. Do you know for sure that you have been accepted by God?
2. Do you love those who have been accepted by God?
3. Are you trusting God to work in your life and in the lives of others?
4. "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the living and the dead." 9
5. Is He your Lord?