

Living Free by Accepting People Romans 15:4-13

To be more accepting of people, you need a unified biblical perspective and a selfless motive for God's glory.

Romans 15:4-6

- **Focus your mind on God and His Word to find His encouragement and perseverance.** Romans 15:4, 5
"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction... Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus."
I Kings 19 and 22
- **Make your motivation the glory of God, not your own needs.** Romans 15:6
"...so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Three examples from Scripture on the biblical meaning to "accept" a person - **See Digging Deeper on the back**

Learn from Jesus on how to accept people.

Romans 15:7

"Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God."

Examples from Jesus: Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 4:32-5:2; Luke 5:30-32

Remember God's three reasons why we must accept others, even difficult people.

Romans 15:8-12

- **Accept them so they can see the work of God in your life.** Romans 15:8, 9; II Samuel 22:49-51
- **Accept them to warn that all will be held accountable to the Lord.** Romans 15:10; Deuteronomy 32:43
- **Accept them so they will accept Jesus.** Romans 15:11, 12; Psalm 117:1; Isaiah 11:10

The Result: Acceptance brings God's hope, joy and peace from His Spirit.

Romans 15:13

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Digging Deeper

Paul challenges all believers to accept other people as Christ has accepted us. That is a high standard. In the first century church, it was difficult for some people to readily accept other people. For example, the Jews would have a hard time overcoming their upbringing and culture to accept Gentiles. That was Paul's main concern as expressed in Romans 15:8-12. Some of those believers might have had a hard time accepting women into the church since they were treated as second class people. And others would have a hard time accepting certain "sinners" since they were outside the body of Christ and lived an objectionable lifestyle. So, the challenge is great.

LifeGroup Discussion:

What people have you found hard to accept?

Areas of potential divide might include different socio economic standards, ethnic or language barriers, certain kinds of sinful behaviors or cultural differences you find wrong. Others may struggle in accepting people that have hurt them. It could be a family member or friend. For them, the idea of forgiveness, reconciliation and acceptance is impossible. Do any of these areas present a challenge to obeying Romans 15:7?

The word "accept" used here in Romans 15 is the Greek word "proslambano." Breaking it down means this. "Pros" means "to" and "lambano" means "take to oneself." It can mean to welcome someone, to receive them with the idea of a special interest in caring for that person.

Below are three uses in the Bible of the word "accept."

What do you learn on how we should "accept" people in these passages?

Who do you know that needs acceptance right now?

- **Acts 18:26** Priscilla and Aquila accepting Apollos for the purpose of teaching and guiding him. How can you help guide others in accepting them?
- **Acts 28:2** Paul was accepted by strangers to care for his needs. When you find others in need, how can you "accept" them or receive them as these strangers received Paul?
- **Philemon 17** Here Paul calls for accepting by forgiving and reconciling with a man. Read the entire book. It is just one chapter and tells the story of Philemon accepting this slave, Onesimus, and forgiving him. Paul is asking Philemon to accept Onesimus back after he ran away and robbed his master Philemon. Somehow Onesimus came to Rome, met Paul and put his trust in Jesus for forgiveness. He now has a responsibility to make things right with Philemon. But Philemon needed to "accept" him back and treat him now as a brother. Forgiving and reconciling is what Paul meant by "accepting" Onesimus in vs. 17. That can be so difficult. Who do you need to forgive and accept?

Next Steps:

1. Find new people to connect with and accept at our old-fashioned, potluck-style Church Picnic next Sunday, August 3 at 12:30 pm. We will meet at Irvine Regional Park in Group Area 1 and there will be many games and activities for everyone to enjoy. We'll provide fried chicken and drinks for all. See a list of food you can bring to share, plus find more details and directions at calvarylife.org/picnic.
2. Let's join together to accept some new friends in our community on our Serve Weekend, August 9 and 10. We will be part of restoring a church on 3rd St. in Santa Ana. Visit the Reach:Local table in the Lobby today to learn more and sign up. Then on Sunday we will help low-income students in Santa Ana and orphans in Africa by bringing in school supplies in our 4th annual "Fill the Bus" event. Discover how you can help and find a list of needed supplies at calvarylife.org/local
3. Join a LifeGroup to find real acceptance from others. To find out more about LifeGroups, stop by Connection Point Central in the Lobby today or visit calvarylife.org/lifegroups
4. And, if you have not yet become a member at Calvary Church, please attend our next Core LifeLab on "How To Connect" on September 14 to learn more about joining our church family. Learn more at calvarylife.org/lifelabs