

Better Together

*EXPLORING REAL WAYS
TO LIVE IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY*

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STUDY GUIDE
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ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER // *Romans 15:7*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Greek word used here for “accept” literally means “to receive,” “to welcome,” or “to take to one’s self,” as into a home or heart as an act of kindness. The standard for acceptance in Christian community is not human status, maturity, or works. The apostle Paul points to spiritual faith being the basis for our connection to one another.

Paul also warns against pride. We are not to use our knowledge, experience, or maturity in the Lord to “please ourselves” or to place ourselves above another. Rather, we accept and build up the one who is not as far along. The church is to accept others in the same way Christ has accepted us – by grace, in peace. Through Scripture the people who are most able to hear and respond to Jesus are those who recognize themselves as sinners.

Our acceptance by God is through no righteousness of our own, but wholly by the grace of Jesus Christ. This brings glory to God. Those who are part of the Church must always have God as the object of our focus and the subject of our praise. This includes the warm receiving of each other.

PRAY:

Ask God to reveal something meaningful through this time of reflection.

READ:

Offer your full care and attention to reading the provided scripture passages.

DISCOVER:

Luke 7:41-47 “A certain creditor had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt.” And Jesus said to him, “You have judged rightly.” Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”

Luke 9:46-48 An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.”

DISCOVER, CONTINUED:

Romans 15:1-7 We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.” For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- 1) Paul instructs us to receive one another as God has received us. Using Luke 7:41-47, list the criteria for who and what Jesus received, or did not receive.
- 2) What conclusions might we draw, based on the list from the previous answer, about how we are accepted by God?
- 3) If this is how we are accepted by God, and we are to accept others in kind, describe what our attitude should be toward others. What would it look like to practice this kind of welcome to one another?
- 4) Paul says we accept one another “in order to bring praise to God.” How does accepting others bring praise to God?
- 5) How, specifically, does our church need to change in order to “accept” one another as Christ has accepted us?

