

APPLICATION

- Accepting someone does not mean that you endorse everything about their life. Your own words, actions and lifestyle will attest to that. Instead accepting another means that you do not reject them. It means that you see their humanity, what you have in common and what you can accept about their life. It shifts the focus from the differences to the commonalities of your lives. Then you can relate to them on the levels or things that you do have in common, even if its just that you both shop at Walmart!
- The point is that accepting someone opens us the opportunity for good things to happen in their life an in your life. No one wants to be rejected. Neither does anyone want to be isolated because of rejecting everyone else. It opens us for the "weaker" or "less mature on" to change.
- This week begin looking at what you have in common with those around you instead of what is different about them. Specifically look at the people or group that you most need to be more accepting of and reach out to them on that level of commonality.

Prayer

O Lord, help us to see others as you see them. Help us to look past the differences to see what we have in common so that we can accept them as you accept us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Freedom Groups were created with the belief that we are all on a journey through life and that our heart's desire is to be free to be all that we can be. Yet there are many setbacks, heartaches and road blocks along the way. Trying to overcome the issues we face in life by ourselves just does not work. We are all the same, no one is different. We need others to help us successfully walk our journey to freedom. Everyone is invited on this freedom journey. Join in!



Accepting Others

NOTES

WARM-UP

- Has anyone ever tried to do something nice for you or give you something nice but you refused it?
- What were your reasons for not accepting their generosity?
- Have you ever tried to do something nice for someone or give them something nice that they rejected? How did that make you feel?

WORD

⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

It can be hard to be accepting of people. Sometimes it is hard to accept someone because they look so different than we do. Other times it is hard to accept others because they act differently or choose to do things that we would never choose to do. Sometime this causes us to not want to get to close to them or accept them out of dislike or even fear. More often than not these difference arise because others think differently or believe differently than we do. These differences can cause real barriers between us that would naturally keep us from openly accepting another person or group of people.

The main problem with this line of thinking is that it can make us very isolated individuals. If you get right down to it everyone is different! If we get real picky about who we will accept we will end up only truly accepting ourselves, because everyone else is different. The result of this way of thinking is that we end up only being with people who are very much like ourselves!

God is amazing. Even though we are different than God in every way that I listed above and even more, God in Jesus Christ accepts us. The Bible tells us that while we were still totally strangers to God, foreign to His ways of doing things, believing opposite of His beliefs and acting totally different than His nature, He accepted us. It is only after we realize that He accepts us do we actually begin to change and become more like Him. But His acceptance of us comes before we are ever looked like Him, acted like Him or even believed in Him. His acceptance of us is truly amazing.

1 - Accept one another!

⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

This verse is interesting. Some scholars think what brings glory to God is that Jesus accepted us. Others think it is that we accept others. The truth is both are true. To bring glory to something can mean many things, but the point is that acceptance brings it. Can you think of a time that someone accepted you and it blessed you?

2 - Acceptance shows strength.

In the New Testament book of Romans, in the 14th chapter, we are challenged to accept someone who's faith is weak. While this verse is talking specifically about Christians accepting each other the principle still holds true for all people. Often time we do not want to accept another person because the differences we see in their lives make us feel uncomfortable, insecure or even somehow threatened. Around them we can become defensive trying to justify our actions or beliefs. This Scripture tells us that if we are strong or confident in what we believe and do, then we should be able to accept another easily. Why? Because we know that God will ultimately be the judge anyway and the differences we see in them does not shake or threaten us. Can you think of a time when someone more mature accepted you, or when you accepted someone less mature, and it helped to strengthen the weaker one?

3 - The challenge to accept.

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We are encouraged, challenged and, for the Christian, commanded to accept others. This is obviously trying to get us to accept people who are different than us -- those that we don't naturally want to accept. Can you name someone, or a group, that you know you need to be more accepting of?