

Acceptance

Introduction:

So many people go through life not really knowing who they are, not comfortable with the way things are going and generally distressed because of feelings of insecurity. You can never feel secure if you don't know who you are and have not come to the place of acceptance concerning your role in life. Security really is about knowing that you are accepted by others for the way you really are. The greatest sense of acceptance of all is to know that God Himself accepts you and you can live securely in that acceptance.

I. We are accepted in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-6 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

A. Our past does not matter. Paul had persecuted the church, even consenting to the death of Steven.

B. Because we have been accepted, we can live under the blessing of God.

C. Acceptance is based on what Jesus Christ has done, not what we have done.

1. None of us can get good enough or do enough good works to get God's attention.

Titus 3:4-7 *“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

2. While we were lost, far away from God, Jesus loved us, cleansed us and brought into a place of acceptance.

Romans 5:8-10 *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”*

II. Our acceptance is not in who we were, but in who we are.

A. We are new creatures.

II Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

I read a story going back to the late 1940s in America. A family from a remote part of the country was making their first visit to a big city. They checked in to a grand hotel and stood in amazement at the impressive sight. Leaving the reception desk they came to the elevator entrance. They'd never seen an elevator before, and just stared at it, quite unable to work out what it was for. An old lady hobbled towards the elevator and went inside and the door closed. About a minute later, the door opened and out came a stunningly good-looking young woman. Dad couldn't stop staring. Without turning his head he patted his son's arm and said, "Go get your mother, son."

1. Being new creatures means that we don't live the way we used to.

2. We don't think the way we once did. (Even when irritations come)

The Oyster

There once was an oyster whose story I tell,
Who found that sand had got under his shell;
Just one little grain, but it gave him much pain,
For oysters have feelings although they're so plain.
Now, did he berate the working of Fate
Which had led him to such a deplorable state?
Did he curse out the Government, call for an election?
No; as he lay on the shelf, he said to himself,
"If I cannot remove it, I'll try to improve it."
So the years rolled by as the years always do,
And he came to his ultimate destiny—stew.
And this small grain of sand which had bothered him so,
Was a beautiful pearl, all richly aglow.
Now this tale has a moral—for isn't it grand
What an oyster can do with a morsel of sand;
What couldn't we do if we'd only begin
With all of the things that get under our skin.

3. We are now children of God and should live like it.

Matthew 5:11-16 *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

- B. We are joint heirs.

Romans 8:15-17 *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."*

1. Heirs means an inheritor and by implication a possessor.
2. A joint-heir is a participant in common.
3. All that Jesus inherited, we are partakers with Him.

Ephesians 2:1-7 *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ²in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."*

III. Now that we are accepted by God, we can accept ourselves.

A. We can easily do this when there is nothing to cover up or try to hide.

I Corinthians 5:7-8 *“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”*

B. We can accept ourselves if we recognize what we have been called.

I Peter 2:9-10 *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”*

1. We’re chosen by God Himself.
2. We’ve inherited a royal priesthood.
3. We’ve been made holy by the blood of Jesus Christ.
4. We are special to the Lord.
5. We now live in light and not darkness.
6. We are the people of God.
7. God’s mercy has been ministered to us.

A little boy was heard talking to himself as he walked across the backyard, baseball cap in place, ball and bat in his hands. "I am the greatest hitter in the world," he said. He threw the ball up, swung and missed. "Strike one," he said. But again, he told himself, "I am the greatest hitter ever." He threw the ball up again, swung and missed. He looked at the ball, and at the bat, and said, "I'm the greatest hitter that ever lived." He threw the ball up again and swung and missed a third time. This time he said, "Wow! Strike three! What a pitcher! I'm the greatest pitcher in the world!..."

Now that little boy accepted the fact that he was a pitcher and not a batter.