



Tweets from Heaven

#3 Philemon: Acceptance

I. Introduction

Instead of rejecting Onesimus (as he had every right to do, as his society urged him to, as his natural inclination was), Paul exhorted Philemon to “receive to himself (vs 17) ‘for love’s sake” this runaway slave.

Acceptance: Webster says that it involves giving admittance or approval to someone...and this admittance comes without protests or reactions.

II. The opposite of being accepted is rejection..it’s isolation and loneliness

- A. From the very beginning God knew that it was not good for man to be alone. See Genesis 2:18
- B. The home is the basic unit that God established to meet the needs of human beings
 - Genesis 2:24 – Cleaving to his wife
 - Ruth 4:14-15 – For the extended family
- C. God instituted the church (the body of Christ) to be focal point for the many varied lives it represents.
 - 1. The term for church, “ekklesia” means a called-out assembly, a gathered group out from behind our closed doors, fenced yards and isolated streets.
 - 2. The first church focused on relationships, not building – Acts 2:41-47.

III. Paul asks for acceptance

Biblical acceptance transcends the natural response of man. It asks for a “supernatural” attitude – one that would have to come from God. It’s not an automatic reaction, it is an act of the will when directly led by the Holy Spirit.

Such acceptance involves understanding that:

- A. No one is perfect: Acceptance involves lowering our expectation levels.
 - 1. Look at the Christian Hall of Fame (Hebrews 11). Great heroes of faith had their weaknesses:
 - Noah – Gen. 9:21 Became drunk after the flood

Abraham – Gen. 12:11-20 Liked and offered his wife to Pharaoh

Gen. 20:1-7 Lied and offered her again, this time to Abimelech

Sarah – Gen. 16:3-4 Urged her husband to lay with her handmaid

Gen. 18:12 Laughed at God over His promise

Moses – Ex. 2:11-15 Was a murderer

Rahab – Josh. 2:9 Was a harlot

Samson – Judges 13-16 Was a womanizer

David – 2 Sam. 11 An adulterer, had a man killed

- B. There needs to be some allowances made for imperfections, sins, mistakes and disagreements.

Look at the illustration found in Joshua 20:1-3 – the cities of refuge

- C. Acceptance doesn't ignore sin, it just focuses its attention on restoration.

Consider if Jesus and the adulterous woman "go and sin no more" in John 8:11

- D. Such acceptance is tough, it involves an act of our will, whether or not our emotions agree.

IV. **So what?**

Who do you have in your life that you need (for love's sake) to accept?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think its so hard to accept some people and not others? What triggers your compassion?
2. When does "acceptance" begin to look like "acquiescence"? What should be the standard?