

STUDY GUIDE



NEW VISION

STUCK

WEEK 5: ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER

ROMANS 15:1-7

09/04/2016

MAIN POINT

Christ gave up His own rights and dignity so that salvation might come to others. He has accepted us so, we should accept one another.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When is a time that you felt rejected by someone?

How does the way Christ has accepted you change the way you feel about accepting others?

Rejection is a common experience in this life, but it is a terrible feeling. No one enjoys being rejected. As Christians we recognize that when we rejected God, He accepted us and welcomed us into a relationship with His Son. The acceptance we have received from Him drives us to accept one another in love and with grace.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 15:1-4.

Why do you think Paul addressed those who were strong? What does it mean that he included himself? How do these words match up with what Paul said earlier in this letter in Romans 12:16?

The literal meaning of the verb rendered bear in verse 1 is “take up.” It can also mean “to put up with.” In other words, accept one another. Paul begins a thought here that he fully lands in verse 7. Paul urged the mature to be proactive in responding with patience, love, and sacrifice in ways that would help other Christians grow their faith.

What’s the difference between pleasing our neighbor (v. 2) and bearing with them and “people-pleasing”?

What examples do you recall of Jesus accepting and serving others?

How do Jesus’ examples help you show genuine concern for others?

Paul appealed to Christ, who did not set out to please Himself. In every instance, Jesus sought to serve by God's standard of sacrificial service (see Mark 10:45; compare 1 Cor. 10:33–11:1; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-8). Likewise, it is a characteristic trait of mature Christians that they seek the growth and benefit of others over self-concern. Such a life speaks well of God and gives glory to Him.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 15:5-7.

Why do we need endurance and encouragement to live in harmony with other Christians? Where do we get such endurance and encouragement?

Paul exhorted stronger Christians to turn to the Scriptures for instruction, hope, endurance, and encouragement. He then commended them to God, who gave them endurance and encouragement. Paul knew that it was the God of the Scriptures who sustains the believer. The Scriptures are powerful because they are the words of the living God.

Looking at verse 7, what do you think it means to accept someone? How did Jesus accept us? How can we be like Jesus when it comes to accepting others?

How can we balance accepting each other with encouraging one another to grow in our love and good works?

Paul longed for Christians everywhere to live in harmony with one another. This did not mean that they would live in lock-step uniformity on all issues. Christian unity can be experienced even when believers have varying opinions on secondary matters. The word “accept” in the original language of the New Testament presses the idea of “wholehearted acceptance.” If Jesus has accepted someone, are we to say that we will not take him or her in as a Christian brother or sister? Our attitude to others must grow from the transformation Jesus achieved in us.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Who do you need to accept out of love for Jesus Christ?

How do we continue to accept one another in Christian community when our faults and flaws begin to show? What drives us to look past these things and accept one another anyway?

In Christ, what acceptance can you freely offer to all who are separated from God?

PRAY

Praise God for loving and accepting you. Ask that His acceptance of you would drive you to give that same level of acceptance to others.

COMMENTARY

ROMANS 15:1-7

15:1. Why should the strong “give in” to the conscience of the weak? The way of love demands it. The strong believer does not forsake his conscience by abstaining from certain of his freedoms, but the weaker believer would have to violate his in order to accommodate the liberties of the strong. Thus the strong should choose in accordance with the weak.

15:2-3. The strong Christian is to follow the example of his Lord, who did not please Himself. As foretold in Scripture,

Jesus bore the insults and hostility that people had against God (Ps 69:9).

15:4. Far from being irrelevant to Christian faith, the OT writings are for our instruction (2Tim 3:16). Not everything in them is applicable to new covenant discipleship, but everything points to Jesus (Lk 24:27).

15:5-6. Paul's prayer is that God will bring these house churches of Rome to the place of harmony, love, and unity that will enable them to best honor God.

15:7-8. These verses show that people from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds struggled with accepting one another. Jesus as the Messiah was born a Jew and ministered to Israel ("I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Mt 15:24) to fulfill OT promises and prophecies. His primary purpose was for Israel, but He also had a design for the nations (Gentiles).