



ACCEPTANCE: demonstrate kindness, patience and forgiveness to all

Breaking free from a culture of rejection to enter heaven's culture of acceptance

1. Everyone is dominated by spirit of rejection or spirit of acceptance

- a) Adam said of Eve 'she is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh' (Gen 2:23)
- b) But Cain rejected Abel (Gen 4:8)

Rejection has affected all of us;

- a) Some rejected as a baby
- b) Most rejected as a child
- c) Most rejected in some way at school/teenage years
- d) Many rejected in adult life

'Balding, skinny, can dance a little,' they said of Fred Astaire at his first audition.

The BIG lie – 'I must have the approval of others in order to feel good about myself'

Experience rejection – Fear Rejection – Believe rejection

Symptoms of rejection and the fear of rejection

I avoid certain people

When I see someone who might reject me I become nervous & anxious

I always am hyper conscious of people who are different to me

I'm always justifying myself and that it's ok to be me

I am crushed by negative feedback

I find one of my deepest motives is to impress others

I am apprehensive around strangers (or even groups of people)

2. Into this world, Jesus Christ came as one perfectly accepted to break the power of rejection

a) perfectly accepted by the Father

Luke 3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my **beloved Son**; with you I am well pleased."

b) bore the depths of human rejection

Isaiah 53: 3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

c) we can know now acceptance of God himself

John 1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.
12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us **accepted** in the beloved.

Luke 3:22 – now applies to US

d) God now sees us in a new way

Col. 3:12 Put on then, **as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved**, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Chosen – God's free choice.

Holy – 'set apart for God'

Dearly loved – God loves you from the gut.

Song 8:6 Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as **death**, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. (lit 'the very flame of the Lord')

Death has met its match in God's love. As the grave is unyielding, so is God's love for you. Relentless. Love – is the blazing fire of God.

The BIG lie that I must earn the approval of others is now replaced with the BIGGER truth

I'm reconciled to God. I'm forgiven by Him and TOTALLY accepted

3. We accept one another in the same way that Christ has accepted us

Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Rom. 15:7 Accept one another, then, **just as** (ie in the same way as) Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Isaiah 46:9 for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, **declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

Just as God now sees you made perfect in Christ we need to see our brothers and sisters in Christ in the same way.

Not that they are now perfect – but one day they will be.

HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR SPOUSE, YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR PARENTS, YOUR FELLOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST **IN THE SAME WAY** THAT GOD HAS ACCEPTED AND RECEIVED YOU?

This culture brings praise to God – why? Because only God could create a culture like it!

4. The process of forgiveness

Acknowledge the offence – get in touch with your feelings

Express your feelings to God – out loud or in writing

Give up your right to judge, condemn, punish or get revenge on the offender. Repent of these attitudes and make a decision not to harbour them any more

Speak out your forgiveness using their name (eg 'John, I forgive you and I release you from the debt you owe me. Jesus, that debt is now between you and John')

Repent of your unforgiveness. 'Thank you Lord that as I confess my sin of unforgiveness you are faithful and just to forgive me and wash me of all unrighteousness'

5. Key hallmarks of a culture of acceptance

a) we will celebrate differences

b) we will overlook minor offences

d) we won't just see the mess – we will see the pain behind the mess

e) we will avoid judgemental thoughts like the plague – they are like the plague!

f) we will think the best of one another & be quick to forgive