



how do we cultivate accepting others as God accepted us?

a weak conscience thinks that by their behavior can make them better so they have to always make sure they're doing the "right thing"

a strong conscience has a proper understanding of Justification by Faith which enables the person to enter into relationships not needing to be right or better than the other person, not needing to win the argument, or show that they're right

Have a biblically informed understanding of your identity

Relate to people not on the basis of them changing or realizing that we're right but love them "just as" Christ received you

Disagree with people but show love, humility etc as we do it.

**texts: 1st Cor. 8:4-11
Romans 15:1-7**

in the scripture examples people were withdrawing from intimacy and relationship because of their differences: neither side was really accepting or loving each other so they were both wrong

Jonathan Edwards thoughts on "Love is contrary to a censorious spirit"

censorious=intolerant and judgmental

what makes a person censorious...not the making of a negative evaluation but enjoying it

the unredeemed heart builds its value and identity by comparison to people who are failing in a given area--morality, social status, etc.

The redeemed heart builds its value and identity on a deep knowledge of God's grace and love...He loved us when we were wrong...he entered into our reality, he radically adjusted himself to have a relationship with me.

Three options

Option 1: Intolerance

this is not an option for a Christian

we know the danger of this in our global community where we have to live with people who think differently

Option 2: Tolerance

involves no negative evaluation but the individual doesn't let their life be affected by the other person

PostModern theorists now talk about three kinds of exclusion

works out like this: I'm not going to let your hang ups affect me. I'm going to do what I want regardless of how it affects you

expulsion
subjugation

assimilation
says "I would love to have a relationship with you but for that to happen you have to be just like me"
so this ends up being just as much a form of intolerance as the others

Option 3: Accept one another just as God accepted you

accept ONE ANOTHER not their beliefs; enter into relationship with them even though you still believe they are wrong

ACCEPT one another: enter in to relationship with them, adjust your life to them, inconvenience yourself, make space for them

1. Taking the time and energy to work at understanding them, why they believe and act like they do
2. Be humble and willing to change, expecting to learn from them
3. Expect and be willing to be misunderstood by them and misconstrued
4. Being willing to honor the pace of God in their lives and not push to hurry it up

Just as God accepted you: negatively evaluate their position but then do everything you can to understand them, why they believe it

On the cross Jesus was not "tolerant"- he was saying "you're so wicked and lost that the only hope you have is the death of the Son of God"- he was negatively evaluating us but he was entering in and becoming involved and vulnerable

strong vs weak

Weak conscience

we generally think of a "weak conscience" as an insensitive one, as someone who isn't bothered by scruples, doesn't feel guilty about things, but Paul uses it another way

The "weaker brother" here wants constant evaluation of ever situation to define, be told, and know exactly what is the right thing and the wrong

Their conscience is "weak" in that it is too weak to protect them, to keep them from always feeling guilty, accused, condemned and defiled

A weak conscience is not deeply transformed and informed by the grace and love of God

Strong conscience

have correct knowledge
are flexible; aren't caught up in worry and stress over "gray areas"

"Strong" might sound like the better people, and Paul does identify with them "we who are strong", but the passage criticizes them for not bearing with and accepting the weak

there was a counterfeit tolerance- one that ends up excluding others by disdain, feeling of superiority, etc