

Acceptance or Approval?

We can accept anyone at anytime without approving of their behavior or beliefs.

Acceptance – being received as adequate or suitable, typically to be admitted into a group.

Approval – the action of officially agreeing to something or accepting something as satisfactory

Belong - BEFORE - Believe... in a church?

To BLESS – divine favor, with endearment, and gratitude.

The have **Gods “blessing”** – can he accept you, love you, and not approve of your behavior? Is his “blessing” his sanction, or endorsement?

Does he bless you as to acknowledge, recognize and validate you as a person.

Membership? – to belong, having been joined, a constituent, received into a group because of mutual compatibility.

What you do is not who you are? (T) (F) ?

Matt 7:21 - ²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Mathew 15:8 - 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Matt 7:18 - A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

John 3:19 - This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Luke 10: 40 - But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”⁴¹ “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

James 2:14 -¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Performance based acceptance. (*I like you if you perform/ agree with me*)

The Holy Spirit leads us today, and this means we “***are not under the Law***” (v18). When we “*walk in the Spirit,*” allowing the *Spirit to work in us and guide us,* we will not sin, we will not “*fulfil the lust of the flesh.*” This is living by the **inner “law of (regulation by) the spirit of life in Christ Jesus**” (Rom 9:2a).

For nearly 1,600 years, from Moses to Paul, Israel **labored** to keep the Mosaic Law. Unlike their heathen (Gentile) neighbors, the Jews had “***the Law of God,***” and other advantages (Rom. 9:4,5; cf. Eph. 2:11-12). Despite their elevated and privileged position, they were *just as sinful as the Gentiles (non-Jews)*. Hence, the Gentiles observed that “**God’s**” people Israel acted just as shamefully as they did (Rom. 2:17-29), thus Paul says concerning Jews and Gentiles; “*there is none righteous no not one*” (Rom 3:10)

A rejection mindset provides toxic alternatives to healthy spiritual living, one of them being a performance-based Christianity.

The rejection mindset promotes “law thinking,” where we hope for approval and acceptance based on how well we perform. The thoughts to “work harder” and “do more,” become an internal pressure. These are not inherently evil traits, but they can become that when they are more important than the person’s unconditional acceptance and love from God, where God accepts us because of His Son.

The lure comes that “works” will get them approval and acceptance. When works override being loved unconditionally, God’s design for life becomes spoiled.

At this stage, the problem is that rejection has infected the motives of a person. They are now unknowingly chasing after love and performing for it all along the way. Most of the time, they are not even aware of this motivation. They just feel a “drive” or “impulse” propelling them into their daily actions. Throughout this stage, rejection is subtly implanting counterfeit values. If you’re honest with yourself, you may find these rejection-based motives lurking within. People bound by the performance trap:

People bound by the performance trap:

- *Feel they have to earn the love and acceptance of others.*
- *Base how they feel about themselves on how well they perform their daily duties. “If I don’t do well, I will not be loved.”*
- *Spend a lot of time mulling over the worries or pressures of tomorrow and fear not doing well in whatever they do. “I will not be accepted or belong.”*
- *Tend to strive and live in a works mentality, where situations fall back on their efforts.*
- *Process their relationship with God in how they can do things to get His attention, versus learning to receive who He is and giving it out.*
- *Take themselves and what they do too seriously, placing constant pressure on themselves. “I can’t deal with not performing well.”*
- *Regularly feel the pressure weigh on them when helping others. The results rest on how they perform.*
- *Spend a lot of time thinking about what others think of them. They over think how they come across to others.*
- *Have this excessive need to be “successful” and become known for their accomplishments.*
- *Are not comfortable with vulnerability and weakness.*
- *Often ignore important relational and identity issues of the heart, usually just to keep going and moving. Remember, with performance, the “show must go on.”*