

GOD'S LOVE AND GOD'S ACCEPTANCE

Introduction

- 1) The ideas of “**love**” and “**acceptance**” are the same to many people today
- 2) God is often used as an example: “*God loves everyone – therefore, shouldn't we love and accept everyone, too?*” Love and acceptance are linked together as the same thing
- 3) The suggestion is that we should “love” others in a way that would *unconditionally* accept their particular lifestyles and beliefs as equally right and valid as our own
- 4) Is this true? Is this what is involved in love? Does God love everyone? Does God accept everyone? How should we understand God's love and God's acceptance?

I) **God's Love and God's Acceptance – Two Circles**

A) **God's Circle of Love**

- 1) Universal, unconditional love for everyone in the whole world (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6, 8)

B) **God's Circle of Acceptance**

- 1) While God loves every person, He does **not** accept, or approve, of every person in what they do or say (Psa. 15; Rom. 1:18, 32; Rev. 21:27)
- 2) God's circle of acceptance is conditional based on His terms (Acts 10:34-35; cf. Phil. 4:18)
- 3) Who does God love, but will not accept?
 - a) Those who do not believe in Jesus and follow the one way (Jn. 8:24; Matt. 7:21)
 - b) Those who are immoral (1 Cor. 6:9-10) and will not repent of sin (2 Pet. 3:9; Lk. 13:3)
 - c) Those who are not born again (Jn. 3:3, 5) and who fail to bear fruit (Jn. 15:2)
- 4) God's circle of acceptance is **smaller** than His circle of love (Matt. 7:13-14)
 - a) This does not reflect badly on God's love, but on man's disobedience (Isa. 59:1-2)

II) **Our Love and Our Acceptance – Two Circles**

A) **Our Circle of Love**

- 1) Must be as large as God's circle of love (Rom. 13:8-10)
- 2) Must love even our worst enemies (Matt. 5:44)

B) **Our Circle of Acceptance**

- 1) We cannot accept/approve teachings or conduct which God does not accept (Eph. 5:3-7)
- 2) This is not unloving, judgmental, bigoted, or narrow-minded – if so, then God is all these things; it is more unloving to accept sin which would condemn one to hell

III) **Let Us Consider Ourselves**

- A) God takes no pleasure in someone being lost (Ezek. 33:11), and neither should we
 - 1) We should find no self-righteous delight in condemning sin or warning sinners
 - 2) We condemn sin and warn sinners to save men from the wrath of God – a work of love
- B) God, while He does not accept sinners in their sin, sacrificially reaches out to save them as precious souls and individuals created in His image
 - 1) Jesus associated with sinners to bring them the word of repentance and salvation from sin
- C) While *properly* enlarging our love, do we *improperly* enlarge our acceptance?
 - 1) Ongoing fellowship with those who teach and practice error (2 Jn. 9-11)
- D) While *properly* limiting our acceptance, do we *improperly* limit our love?
 - 1) “They are _____ sinners, so I don't want anything to do with them!” If this is our attitude, then we are not His disciples! (Lk. 19:10) [*Remember, we were sinners once*]

Conclusion

If we ignore the plight of all sinners, we do not have God's love. If we overlook any sin in others, we have not conformed to God's acceptance. God's love and truth must be honored above the opinions and feelings of man. Let us show to all men the love of God, but also honor what He will approve and fellowship according to His eternal word.