

Accepted or Excepted

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Feeling accepted by others is something we all desire. It starts in the home with spouses feeling wholly accepted by each other. In the same way, it is important our children feel accepted in the home. All should know that they are part of the family.

Throughout life, acceptance by others is critical to our self-esteem and confidence. When we feel unaccepted (call it, “excepted”), these are attacked and weakened. Desperately striving for acceptance, one may attempt to change or hide his true personality.

In the local church, feeling accepted is essential. In fact, accepting others is inspired instruction. In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he greatly addresses the issue of acceptance among the members. In the first chapter he writes:

For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ” (1 Cor. 1:11–12).

These brethren were actually dividing themselves based on various teachers. If you liked, or were taught by the same teacher as another, you were accepted. If not, you were “excepted.”

Later in the same letter, Paul again addresses the issue of division among the Corinthian brethren.

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it (1 Corinthians 11:18).

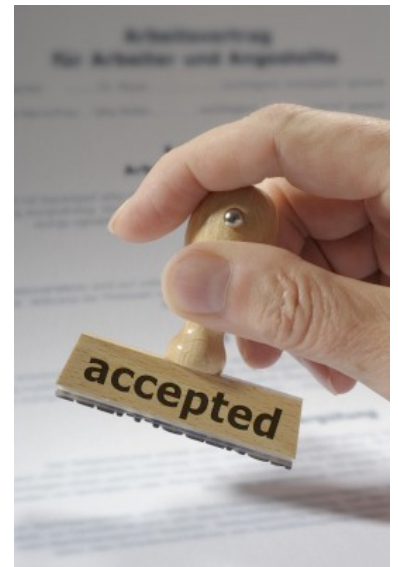
The above Scripture was part of a serious rebuke to the Corinthians regarding their observance of the Lord’s Supper. Once again, some were accepted and others were excepted. This is ironic as the Supper speaks so much about our acceptance by God! We remember the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ to bring about our acceptance.

In the next chapter of the letter, Paul again addresses the same issue of acceptance. This time Paul uses the example of the body to emphasize his point.

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot says, “Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

16 And if the ear says, “Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,” it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.



17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

19 If they were all one member, where would the body be?

20 But now there are many members, but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;

23 and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,

24 whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked,

25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 1 Corinthians 12:14–26

As Paul so clearly illustrates, all the members of the body need to be accepted. No one part of the body can except another member from the body. Let us strive to make all members feel accepted in our local body.