



Acceptance

Acceptance is a powerful yet overlooked and misunderstood concept. When we aren't accepting people, places, and things as they are, we are actively fighting them at some level. The fight exhausts us and takes our physical, emotional, mental, relational, and spiritual energy. There is an internal struggle and restlessness that goes something like this: *"I don't like it. I don't want it. I want something different. Why does it have to be this way?"* Can you hear in that dialogue the desire to change things? Can you see how it actually prevents you from getting to the necessary dialogue of *"It is what it is; now what?"*

You have more power over yourself than things outside yourself. Once you accept the things you cannot change, you can then look at your personal choices. Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- ❖ What are you thinking and feeling about the situation? Can you change your attitude so you will feel differently?
- ❖ Do you need to take some action that you have avoided?
- ❖ Is it time to set a boundary?

You can always change your response to your circumstances, thereby changing their power over you. Perspective matters too. God uses whatever comes into our lives for his glory and our good (Romans 8:28). Knowing that no suffering is wasted often empowers us to endure tough times. Surrendering your will and life to God will allow you to let go of the outcome and be aligned with his purpose.

Acceptance is frequently misunderstood to include tolerance of things that are wrong, but acceptance isn't about having weak boundaries; it is about letting go of the restlessness and futile struggle we often engage in that keeps us wishing things were different, thereby preventing us from taking responsibility for decisive action.

Relationship Prayer

God,

Help me accept the people and circumstances in my life just as they are, so I can be free to respond to them in the best way possible.

Relationship Challenge

Answer these questions:

- ❖ Do you frequently think about how you would like people to be different?
- ❖ Do you fantasize about how you wish your life were different?
- ❖ Are you frequently angry with God and stuck on the “why” question?
- ❖ Are you avoiding setting boundaries in a relationship?

Take these action steps:

- ❖ Focus on accepting the people in your life just as they are.
- ❖ Thank God for everything in your life exactly as it.
- ❖ Instead of asking God “why,” ask him “why not?”
- ❖ Take steps toward setting a needed boundary in a relationship.

Scripture Meditation

Matthew 26:36-42

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and

keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus struggled intensely with relinquishing his will to the Father, knowing that his crucifixion wasn’t going to be easy. He was honest with God about his inner conflict, as we too should be as we work through our own internal battles on our way to acceptance. How necessary is acceptance? Without acceptance, Jesus wouldn’t have been able to submit himself to the suffering ahead. He needed to be aligned emotionally, spiritually, relationally, physically, and mentally with God’s will.

If you have any questions you would like to ask Karla, please feel free to email her. Portions of your email and Karla's response to you may be used anonymously in future materials. By emailing her, you are giving your implied permission.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.