

The Creative Power of Acceptance

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Creativity is the phenomenon of transforming something out of nothing or something into something wholly other than. God's educators have at their disposal the most transformative power in all of creation—the agape love of God. It is the reason the scripture says that if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. They are created anew because of God's unconditional acceptance. Such acceptance results in creative transformation.

The word of God is replete with examples of the creative power of acceptance. The people of God, for example, thought that blind people were cursed because of sin, yet the Son of God embraced them and cured their blindness. Lepers were considered unclean and were to be shunned, but the Son of God embraced lepers and cleansed them. Samaritans were deemed a defiled race, yet the Son of God accepted them resulting in an entire Samaritan village being transformed. God's people treated tax collectors with disdain because they were considered corrupt sinners, yet Jesus chose Matthew and went to Zacchaeus' home resulting in both men's conversion.

Zacchaeus and the woman of Samaria were the two greatest accounts of transformation in the gospel based on the creative power of acceptance. They both were rejected by the people of God because they thought that God rejected them. The Son of God, however, embraced them and it transformed their lives. These are the only accounts of individual conversions in the gospels. In the other incidences in scripture people believed or were transformed because of a miracle that was performed on them or on others around them. In these two cases, however, transformation was purely a result of being accepted amid rejection. There were no notable miracles such as healing, resurrecting, cleansing, or other signs and wonders. Rather, in these two incidences, Jesus was creative in His approach to people. He knew that no one would ever be converted or transformed as a result of being rejected.

From an application standpoint, imagine that Zacchaeus and the woman of Samaria were children in need of a life altering education. Both children were deemed unacceptable because of their backgrounds. The girl's dejected background was because of her Samaritan birth (*For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.* John 4:9) and the boy was unacceptable because of his behavior (*They all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.* Luke 19:7) They were both rejected because the people of God thought that it was God's way and what God wanted them to do.

However, the individuals that the people of God rejected thinking that they were minding the things of God, the Son of God accepted because of God's love. In both instances, God's people allowed their social, cultural, and institutional values to take precedence over the value of the individuals who were created in God's image.

God's educators must become creative in their approach to education by not looking at children through the eyes of the institutions under which they serve but through the eyes of the God for Whom they serve. Jesus did not see a "Samaritan" and He did not see a "chief tax collector." Instead, He saw a thirsty "woman" and He saw a "son of Abraham" in need. Both cases were a matter of Divine appointments initiated by Christ as He was compelled by the love of the Father. He accepted unacceptable individuals because God accepted them.

By the same token, Jesus does not look at schools, classrooms or groups. He sees children in need of transformation. That same perspective should characterize God's educators. That same power is also available to God's educators. It is the transformative power of acceptance based on the unconditional love of God. There is no greater transformational miracle.

