

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
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**“Going The Second Mile -
As WE Bear and Accept One Another”**

EPHESIANS 4:1-3
ROMANS 15:1-7

Satan delights to get us at odds with one another. If he can get us to become annoyed, upset, and out of sync with the saints, our mission will be compromised. As we've learned in this series, and as many of us have experienced firsthand, every relationship we have is vulnerable and can rupture quite easily. If we don't work at it, our idiosyncrasies will become irritants and our unity will unravel. That's why we must follow the exhortation in **Ephesians 4:3** to: “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

The church in Roman was NOT divided in their **FAITH**, but they were divided on many **NONESSENTIAL** issues. Now Paul is teaching us about Bearing and Accepting one another not based on our preferences but on the foundation of our Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In **Romans 15:7** we are told to “receive or accept one another.” Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words informs us that the Greek word used here means “to take to oneself or to receive ... suggesting a welcome.” Paul is saying “**ACCEPT** one another,” which is the opposite of “**REJECT**.”

But how can we **ACCEPT** one another with so many controversial issues that divide us? In verse 7, Paul begins by saying, “**Therefore**.” Now whenever you see the word “therefore” in the Bible, you should see what it's there for. Well, let's see what Paul's “**Therefore**” is there for!

As we learned when we studied Romans 14 last Sunday about “Judging One Another”, Paul is writing to two distinct groups of people in the church at Rome: the weak and the strong. And each group grated on the other. Let me make an important point. What we're talking about today is really not a sin issue. We are not asked to tolerate someone's trespasses. Instead, we're called to give grace to those who are wired differently than we are.

1. PUT UP -V-1

When Paul uses the word “**ought**,” he's saying that we're obligated to be gracious with others. The word, “**bear**” means to “endure patiently and to be indulgent.” To bear with someone is to be willing to suspend a rightful demand out of consideration for the plight or weakness of another. We don't tolerate much today. We sound off, or run off, or run somebody else

off. The key here is found in the last part of the verse: “**and not to please ourselves.**”

2. BUILD UP V-2

The phrase “**edification**” is a construction term. When we bear with one another, we allow God to use us to help construct Christians. God is committed to building people up and is greatly grieved when we pull back or demolish that which He is constructing.

3. LOOK UP v-3

As we fix our eyes on Jesus, we'll be reminded that He did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

4. GROW UP V-4

The word “**patience**” here means “**endurance**” relates to how we deal with life's problems and people's weaknesses. The Bible encourages us so that we can be filled with hope - hope that others will change, and more importantly, that we will change.

5. STAND UP V-5

God's heart is for the church to be united and to stand together according to **Acts 4:32**: “All the believers were one in heart and mind...” I don't know about you, but I've made the mistake of allowing my first impressions of people to keep me from being one in heart and mind with them.

6. SPEAK UP V-6

The phrase “means “**with one accord**” and is only possible when there is **one mind**” no contention or strife. When we allow others to bug us, then our worship will be short-circuited, and our service will be splintered, and we will not glorify God our Father as we are told to do.

7. STEP UP V-7

We step up when we “**Receive or Accept**” one another just as Christ has accepted us just as we are. Believers are to accept one another with love and without reservation or judgment. And in **Romans 14:3**, as here, believers are commanded to **accept one another** in the same gracious way that **Christ has accepted us**. He is calling on all Christians to **accept one another** in the fullest and deepest sense, to treat each other with love and understanding, **just as Christ also accepted us**.

Let us beware of the spirit of **Diotrephes** who, as John said, “loveth to have the preeminence.” So, let's summarize Paul's message: Basically, it's as simple as this – **DON'T JUDGE ONE ANOTHER IN DISPUTABLE THINGS**. If you have beliefs against certain disputable practices—don't judge those who don't and don't parade your list of convictions; just live them out with love and integrity. God help each of us not to be distracted by a bunch of controversial, disputable things. Rather, let's focus on love and Christ and His Kingdom and reaching those without Christ.