

# Accepting Our Partners as They Are in Marriage

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of experiencing the love of God and being accepted by Him just as we are, which will give us the confidence to be ourselves in our relationships and build a peaceful home in marriage.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:25, John 15:12, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:2-3, Philippians 2:3-4, Colossians 3:13, Hebrews 13:5, 1 Peter 4:8, 1 John 4:18

**Topics:** "God's Unconditional Love", "Acceptance in Marriage"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of accepting our partners as they are in marriage, drawing parallels to Adam and Eve's initial openness before sin led to shame and hiding. He explains that many people wear masks to hide their true selves due to fear of rejection, which can hinder genuine relationships. Poonen highlights that true acceptance comes from understanding God's unconditional love, which frees us from the need for human validation. He encourages couples to listen to both spoken and unspoken words of their partners, fostering an environment of acceptance and growth. Ultimately, a home centered on Christ will cultivate peace and understanding between spouses.

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## Transcript

Before sin came, "Adam and Eve were naked and were not ashamed". They were open and honest with each other and had nothing to hide. But as soon as they sinned, things changed. They covered themselves with fig leaves immediately. Why did they do that? There were no "peeping Toms" in that garden. And they were certainly not covering themselves from the animals. Why then did they need to cover themselves with fig leaves? They were covering themselves from each other.

One of the results of sin is that we hide from one another. All people hide the parts of their personality that they feel are ugly. They would be embarrassed if others knew those details about them. And so they wear masks. They put up a front, appearing to be relaxed, cool and happy, when all the while, they are miserable and defeated beneath the surface.

Inside everyone is a desire to find someone who will love him even when the other person knows him fully. We wear masks because we have had bad experiences with other people. We know that people will not accept us if they know everything about us. And so we put up a front before people so that they will accept

us. This is true among Christians too. When Jesus was on earth, He found many religious people wearing masks - and that was why He could not help them.

The wonderful thing about God is that He accepts all of us just as we are. A religion that teaches that you've got to improve, before God accepts you, is a false religion. Jesus did not come with such a religion. He came with the message that God loves us just as we are. God knows that we cannot change ourselves. And so He receives us just as we are - and He changes us Himself.

I read an article some time ago that addressed this issue. I don't remember the author's name. The article said:

"All of us go through life playing a 'hiding game'. Because we are ashamed of what we are, we hide from each other. We wear masks so that others won't be able to see the real person living inside us. We look at each other through our masks and call that 'fellowship'. We give people the impression that we are secure and undisturbed, but that is only a mask. Underneath that mask we are confused, afraid and lonely. We fear lest others see through us. We are afraid that if they saw the real person inside, they would reject us and perhaps laugh at us - and their laugh would kill us. So we play the 'pretending game' - appearing to be confident and assured, but all the while trembling like a child within. Our whole life becomes a front. We talk and joke with others, telling them all the un-important things about ourselves and nothing about that which is really crying out within us."

"We long to be accepted, understood and loved by others. But we have found in experience that whenever we expose our real selves to others, they reject us. We keep searching for someone who will accept us even when they know everything about us. But we never find such a person. We hear of born-again Christians talking about love, and hope rises within our hearts that perhaps they might accept us. But when we join them, we discover very soon that they too are wearing masks. And they only find fault with us."

"What is the solution to this? We need to see ourselves accepted and loved by God just as we are. God is Love. To experience the love of God will make us bold. And we will no longer need to pretend. We will then be ourselves - with God as well as with man. The love of God will never force us to do anything. God recognizes all our imperfections and He still accepts us without condemning us. On the other hand, He wants to perfect us. To know that we have been accepted by God, in spite of all that He sees in us and knows about us, is the root of a happy Christian life. This is the abundant life that Jesus came to give."

"Knowing the love of God will also bring a permanent end to our seeking for acceptance from man. We will be filled with confidence. Our guilt will be gone and our fears will be driven away. We may be alone sometimes, but never lonely, for God has promised never to leave us or forsake us."

"Your kindness and gentleness and the fact that you care enough to try and understand your partner's feelings will make your partner grow wings - small wings and feeble wings initially, but wings. And if you don't give up, those wings will grow, so that one day both of you will fly up into the sky as eagles - the way God intended you to."

There is something crying out within our marriage-partner - a longing to be accepted. And so it is important that we give a listening ear - not only to the words that our partner speaks but also to the words that remain unspoken - to the silent words in the heart that are never spoken. The great tragedy is that we don't believe that even God will accept us as we are. And so we hide from Him as well. That is what Adam

and Eve did. They ran behind a tree to try and hide from God.

Many husbands and wives cannot love each other because they have not found the joy of being accepted by God themselves. They have got religion but not Christ. One of the devil's masterpieces has been to give people an empty shell of a Christian religion without Christ - and that has made people miserable. Multitudes turn away from such a religion, which is not true Christianity. True Christianity is Christ Himself.

Every home where Jesus Christ is the Centre will be a peaceful home. It will be a home where husband and wife understand each other, where they accept one another because they are secure and confident in the fact that God has accepted them both. That is the type of home we must build.

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