

# **THE DAILY AMEN Devotional**

## **January 22, 2018 by Amy Dalke**

*“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”*

Ephesians 1:6 KJV

*“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:7 NIV)*

### **You are accepted in Christ.**

That’s past tense, in case you didn’t catch it. You are already accepted.

You have been warmly welcomed into God’s family. And this isn’t a one of those situations at the heavenly gates where St. Peter checks to see if your name is on the A-list before he clears you to enter.

Quite the opposite, in fact. God pursued you. He showed up on earth to personally deliver himself to you. He didn’t wait around for you to clean up good and holy enough to get there on your own. That would be sort of like a Do-It-Yourself Christianity, and there is no such thing. It’s also called self-righteousness, and trust me. Not only is it impossible to maintain, it gives you a headache and generally annoys everyone around you. (Ask me how I know.)

But wait. This acceptance we have in Christ is merely a fancy feel-good phrase until we choose to believe it.

I can’t tell you exactly what it will look like in your everyday life, but when I personally believe that I am (already!) fully accepted by God in Christ, it looks something like this:

I relax. I quit grappling for position. I stop climbing over others to exalt myself. I give up the posturing games. (You know, the ones where I passively drop hints of my success and accomplishments so that you’re impressed?) (Guilty.)

When I live as one who belongs to Jesus, I quit trying so hard to belong with all the “cool people.” Social media might tell me that everyone is hanging out without me, but does that really affect my value? (Hello, middle school just called, and they want my awkwardness back.)

Believing that I am already accepted in Christ has also changed the way that I use my God-given resources. I finally realized that labels and trends might temporarily influence someone’s opinion of me...but at the end of the day, others’ opinions don’t win me any awards. (I mean, if I was a celebrity or something, the opinion of others could technically matter in a Who Wore It Better/Best Dressed type of situation, but I’m not, so that doesn’t count.) (In that case, though, we’d place that trophy in the Treasures on Earth column, with the moth and rust and what-not.)

This is where our choice comes in: we believe that God has already accepted us fully in Christ, or we are conformed to the pattern of the world and keep living for a temporary membership card.

One more thing, and this is MAJOR, so bring your attention close: there is more to this acceptance than the by-product of security and self-confidence. **When you and I believe we are truly accepted into God's inner circle, we understand that we have a significant role in his family.**

Every last one of us is a Big Deal to the Body of Christ, The Church. You aren't an outsider. You aren't left out. You are not meaningless.

If you caught yourself thinking, *"If you knew me, you would not say that..."* or *"I don't have anything valuable to offer,"* — this is a bright red flag that you've believed something that is exactly NOT TRUE.

Scripture is full of evidence that you are uniquely gifted for a role in this family. (see 1 Peter 4:10-11, Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and more...)

The elephant in the room here is that people who have been accepted by the grace of God... don't always offer this same gracious acceptance to others. (See that previous discussion about DIY Christianity. This is a result of that.)

This isn't breaking news. Evidently the whole "people can be difficult" thing has been an issue since *always*, because the apostle Paul instructed the Romans in this way:

*"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." (Romans 15:7 NIV)*

When you *know* the grace of God in Christ, it's impossible to deny that grace to others. In the family of God, we have all been given the grace to belong, the grace to serve, and the grace to give away to others who are equally undeserving.

Amen.

Amy