

### **The Object Lesson of John 13: (part three of a four part study)**

So the key verse in dealing with the obstacle of pride and prejudice, so that we can be free to humbly serve others is Romans 12:3, where we read this –

**“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”**

Realizing that every Christian has been given a measure of faith by God can certainly restrain our pride and keep us humble. How? To whom much is given, much is required! If you have been given a large measure of faith, then it is incumbent upon you to fulfill the responsibility that goes with it, rather than developing a superiority complex because of it. It is no coincidence that Paul embarks upon a discourse regarding spiritual gifts in the body of Christ (12:4-8), immediately after his insightful admonition in Romans 12:3. But he doesn't stop there. Paul knew full well that prejudice often becomes a partner in crime with pride. So fast forwarding to Romans 14:1, as well as 15:7, we read this –

**“Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. . . Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.”**

The key concept in both texts is that of “acceptance.” Prejudice accepts others based on certain conditions. A disposition which is free of both pride and prejudice interacts with others on the basis of unconditional acceptance. In Romans 14, the lack of acceptance is based on a bias which can develop in any Christian, as a result of those various gray areas of conscience. In Romans 15, the lack of acceptance involves the issue of racial and ethnic prejudice, creating a rift between the Jewish and Gentile Christians in that church (Romans 11:17-24; 15:7-13).

Perhaps the clearest Pauline assertion which promotes the all-important attitude of unconditional acceptance among Christians, is found in Galatians 3:26-28 –

**“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

Our eternal standing before God is one of total equality, regardless of the racial, economic or gender status we occupy in this life. Positions of apparent prominence in a particular society can easily generate the pride and prejudice which in turn, hinders the unconditional acceptance so necessary in promoting humble service on behalf of others. Pride and prejudice! Don't let them become an obstacle to following the example of our Savior in humbly serving others.