

Accepting Others, “Zero Tolerance”

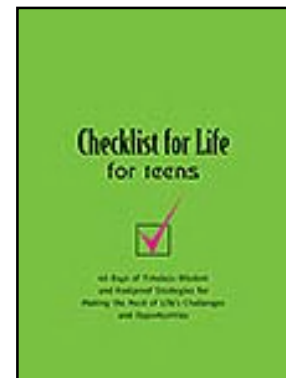
The term “zero tolerance” usually has negative connotations; but I think this devotion is an exception.

To begin, this devotion is based on God’s grace – not man’s law; and thus, it not subject to the “shortcomings” and failures of a system...**but rather is the promised and eternal love of God...for his children.**

Beginning with an opening scripture from Psalm, chapter 147:
He heals the heartbroken and bandages their wounds.

Ever have medical treatment due to a physical injury? Well you know then how welcoming and necessary it is...to be helped when you need help...and to be healed when you need healing. Our God is love and does indeed help and heal those who cry out to him; **He is a loving father that way...**

Continuing on the theme of the last devotion, the fact remains that children of God are called to be caring (helping and healing) to others; and by others, I mean those who need help!



Let me re-emphasis that to **“go against the tide of teenage favoritism and befriending” takes a big person – a person with courage and self-identity.** By choosing to help those who are, by popular demand, rejected by most is to forgo the acceptance and understanding of the mass – some of whom you may have as friends or desire...

The devotion encourages the teen reader begin by “looking at people from a more compassionate perspective.” By taking the *road less traveled* or the differing view of people, you may see them as God sees them. God sees us all as equal – though still undeserving of his love; yet, being the father that he is, he loves each and everyone one the same. **The evidence of this unbiased love is Christ – who came for each and everyone one a sacrifice and substitute for our sins.**

When you see others as God sees them; as no different from you in terms of their position before God, than you begin to see that God is truly love – and that his son is truly a savior for all. In this view (or vision) is the realization that we are also called to love others – even those who desire to hurt us, or our enemies.

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Homework:

Please try to do these:

- Appreciate the fact that God made each of unique...as individuals
- Follow Jesus’ example of infinite tolerance
- Realize that making fun of others is ignorance of Jesus’ example
- See everyone as worthwhile and valuable
- Be careful and mindful of the way you look at those who are different
- Be more compassionate toward outcasts

Things to Do:

- ✓ Read in the Gospels to see how Jesus treated outcasts like Zaccheus (the tax collector), Mary Magdalene (prostitute), or the “woman at the well” (Samaritan and divorced...)
- ✓ Ask God to reveal any prejudice...and to help you overcome...
- ✓ Pray for spiritual maturity (courage, love, etc.) to follow Jesus’ example
- ✓ Thank God for accepting you and loving you just the way you are
- ✓ Confess any judgmental attitude you have toward others who are not like you

Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “Let us treat men and women well; treat them as if they were real. Perhaps they are.

One of my favorite scriptures is included in this devotion; from the book of Micah, chapter 6, the prophet says:

But he’s already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It’s quite simple: **Do what is fair and just** to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don’t take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.