

# PERFECTLY LOVED AND ACCEPTED

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**D**iscrimination is a big deal! This is one of the many frailties of humanity that the CoVid-19 pandemic brought to the surface and the news had been flooded with this hot topic, especially in the western world. But do you know that human beings are not the only objects of discrimination? That we discriminate against fruits and vegetables, as well?

I learned from a food network program that a whopping 6 billion pounds of produce is wasted every year in America! This produce is perfectly good to eat, but they are either not harvested by the farmers or they don't fly off the shelves for only one reason - the way they look. And this does not yet include the wastage from its production, which easily translates to the amount of energy, land, water and fertilizer, the hours of manpower spent, and such other costs to grow them.

Apparently, this produce does not meet certain beauty standards so they are thrown away. These standards include size, shape, scarring, discoloration and unknown. If it is too small or too big, they are difficult to stack so they are often discarded. Those that are misshapen, such as a cucumber that is too curved or a potato with two heads will never be selected for anyone's family dinner. Scarred tomatoes and speckled mangoes won't sell because people usually assume that the blemished skin indicates diseased flesh. Washington apples that are not entirely and perfectly red would remain shelved until decay takes them. And if it is unknown, like if it is too strange-looking or funky in smell like Southeast Asia's marang and durian, customers would stay away and stick

to the all too familiar apples and oranges.

Did any of these remind you of yourself recently? We are no better consumers than our friends in the west, are we? And the uncanny thing is that the way we discriminate against produce is, more often than not, the same way that we discriminate against people!

We tended to make fun of those who were vertically challenged and those who were too tall when we were kids, didn't we? How about those who were skinny and those who were left in the \_\_\_\_\_, didn't we tease them, too? And yes, I'm quite certain that you were able to fill in the blank mentally. We all did.

We don't have to go through the other "beauty standards" to realize that we do discriminate against others, whether intentionally or not. The fact is, WE DO. Even the Bible affirms that "People look at the outward appearance" in 1 Samuel 16:7. And because of this, people have gone to great lengths to change their appearance because of what they think society thinks of them. Why? So that they would feel loved and accepted.

Fashion, makeovers, makeunders, cosmetics, surgeries, botox, fillers, self-development classes, self-help books, anti-ageing creams, and the like are now billion-dollar industries because people are not satisfied with how they look. And if they can't change their appearance, they strive to change their status.

The aspiration of parents before was to have their children grow up to become doctors, lawyers, engineers or pilots. THE dream now is for

their kids to become a celebrity. Whether as a singer, actor, chef, or even pastor, nothing but a celebrity will do. This is the good life that so many people are dreaming of, willing to spend fortunes for, and willing to do anything just to attain it. And when they do attain it, they find that it is all a lie. So much so that if there was a pill that would make one feel numb, many people would take it! That's why this generation is seeing the greatest number ever of those who are hurting, miserable, angry, conflicted, depressed, isolated, and suicidal.

The truth is that because broken and fallen people have inhabited and run this broken and fallen world, love and acceptance will always be a dream. UNLESS the God of Love comes into one's life -

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Only through Jesus can we be restored. Only by Jesus can we be truly loved and accepted. Only in Jesus do we have a bright hope and a future. Only Jesus!

Let us thank God, our Father, who gave. Let us thank God, our Father, who loved. Let us thank God, our Father, who accepted us into His family. Thank God, our Father!

Because of God, you and I are perfectly loved and accepted. And today being our Father's Day, let us not forget to honor and thank Him through the greatest gift that He longs from us - our whole life of worship and devotion! ✱