



REVIEW:

We falsely believe: I am not fully loved

The truth is: God fully loves you

What verse can you think of that affirms this truth?

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| TRUTH | God loves you | The work is finished | God is Changing You | You are significant |
| LIE | I am not fully loved | I must do more | I cannot change | I have nothing to offer |

IT IS FINISHED

John 19:30 (NIV)

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

What did Jesus mean when he said, "It is Finished."?

Jesus was indicating that the work of providing salvation was complete.

What did Jesus have to accomplish to make salvation possible?

- 1) He had to live a sinless, holy life.
- 2) He had to die as a substitute payment for our sin

Why was it necessary for us that Jesus lived a sinless life?



Deuteronomy 17:1 (NIV)

Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him.

- 1) Jesus had to live a sinless life so that he could be a **perfect, spotless sacrifice** for our sins. Jesus could not have died as our substitute if he was guilty and needed to die for his own sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NIV)

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

- 2) If Jesus did not live a holy, sinless life, then he could not **pass on to us the gift of his righteousness**. We would still be trapped with our sin nature, unable to stand in the presence of our holy God.

THE STANDARD OF HOLINESS

What standard does “religion” typically call us to meet?

Religions often tell us there is a standard of righteousness we must measure up to in order to be acceptable to God. This standard is often expressed in terms of things we must believe, things we must do and things we must not do. Ultimately, false religion places the ability to get to God into our hands and is dependent on our performance.

What is the problem with this approach?

One problem with this approach is that we are never really sure when we have actually measured up to the standard. The standard is never quite clear. And once you've have reached the standard, are you able to continually sustain life at that point? What happens if you fall?

The real problem with this approach is that religion-made standards fall far short of the only standard that God has set – holiness. **There are no shades of holiness. We are either entirely holy, or entirely sinful.**



Why is holiness the only standard we are called to meet?

Holiness is the only standard acceptable to God because anything less than holiness embraces evil. God is not content with a “little” evil entering his presence. A “little” rebellion never is healthy for any relationship that desires true oneness and intimacy. Holiness is the only acceptable standard because God is holy and he cannot deny who he is.

Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

The Law and God’s character demand holiness as the only standard. Once that is broken, holiness is out of our reach. Because we are born with a sin nature, holiness has always been out of our reach. There is nothing we can do to meet the demands of God’s Justice or change our sin nature.

What are the implications for us if Christ has done everything that needed to be done in order to bring us to God?

Jesus met the standard of holiness on our behalf. There is nothing left for us to do in order to make ourselves acceptable to God.

Galatians 2:21 (NIV)

I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

What are we essentially communicating if we still feel we have to “perform” in order to be acceptable to God?

We are communicating that Christ’s sacrifice was insufficient to save us and bring us before God. We are declaring that the work of salvation is NOT finished and that it is now dependent on me to fill in the gap of what Christ was not able to accomplish on my behalf.

Paul writes to the Galatians who were declaring that people needed both faith in Jesus and obedience to the law, in order to be saved. Read Paul’s reaction below.

Galatians 1:6-9 (NIV)

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!



Why was this so significant an issue for Paul?

To claim that we can still earn our way to God is to completely deny the work of Christ on the cross to pay for our sins and give us the gift of his righteousness.

Galatians 2:16 (NIV)

Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

In what ways does this truth bring freedom to our lives? How does it take some of the pressure off us to be good?

What are the implications with regard to how God views us, if we sin this week?

God still views us through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. We have sin in our lives, but the Father sees that it has been dealt with and paid for by Jesus Christ. Though I still sin, I am covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the Father views me as holy.

Romans 8:1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Why is this verse so powerfully freeing to those who believe it?

Have there been times when you felt God was not happy with you and was judging you for some reason? Can you share?

How does this verse free us from that perspective?

If I do not need to be righteous by my own efforts to meet God's expectations, does that free me to do whatever I want? Can I freely embrace sin without guilt?



Romans 6:1-2 (NIV)

¹ What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

What does it mean that we died to sin?

To die to sin means that sin is no longer to play a role in our new life with Christ. The reason Christ came was to set us free from bondage to sin and its consequence in our lives.

Marriage Illustration: When one gets married, a part of him/her dies – the single life. There are patterns in the old single life that are no longer appropriate in the new relationship. It is no longer appropriate to date other people; it is not appropriate to make major decisions on their own; they should not spend money however they individually would like to spend money. They are now to act as one, only doing things that bring joy, peace and relational safety to the other person.

When we come to Christ it is because we say we are repentant of our old sinful life and wish to walk in new relationship with him. To commit to continuing in the old life is to acknowledge we were not truly repentant and that we do not truly desire Jesus to be Lord of our lives.

Living for Jesus has nothing to do with Performance, but it has everything to do with Relationship.

If we do not need to do anything to continually earn our way into God's favour, then why does God call us to "serve" him?

Serving God is never for his benefit. In fact, technically speaking, there is absolutely nothing you can do "for" God. He needs nothing and there is no way you can make his life more complete.

Acts 17:25 (NIV)

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

Serving God is God's gift to us. It is not about performance, but it is about inviting us to partner with him in his mission on earth. God invites us to be his representatives in a world that has lost sight of him. God invites us to represent his love and truth, knowing that it will, at the same time, give us incredible joy and grow our relationship with him. Serving God is purely for our benefit and the benefit of those around us.

How does it make you feel to know you don't have to earn God's approval by your performance, that you are already approved by God?



How does it make you feel to know there are no rules you have to live up to in order to be saved, other than to place faith in Jesus?

How might these truths impact how you live and relate to others this week?

How might this perspective change how you approach ministry and mission?



AT HOME:

Each day take one of these verses and spend time reflecting on all its implications. Ask God to help you understand the full extent of his approval and to point out areas where you have difficulty accepting it.

Romans 8:1 (NIV)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Colossians 1:21-22 (NIV)

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--

Colossians 2:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ¹⁰ and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Colossians 2:13 (NIV)

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

Colossians 3:3 (NIV)

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV)

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (NIV)

²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Choose one verse that strongly communicates the truth of being approved by God and meditate on its implication.

We encourage you to memorize this verse to help you battle the lies we will reveal next session.