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In our family of five we have a long-standing affiliation with two clubs: The Silly Club and The Serious Club. Though, who belongs in which club is subject of much debate. We have a tendency to rotate membership. Originally, I was the president and sole member of the Serious Club, but to the welcome surprise of my husband and kids over the years I have become more "fun." Now I am not only in the Silly Club, but on occasion even give my youngest a run for his money as president of it!

I tell you this not as trivial information about myself and our family, but because I believe the reason I am a little more laid back and not so serious all the time stems from a growing awareness of God's grace. I know seems unrelated, but in gaining a deeper understanding of his perfect performance for me, I have come to see how I was living in bondage to my own perfectionism and performance.

Before this shift I had never considered how my idols, inner thoughts and motives were a direct reflection of my limited view of justification. Well, to be quite honest for a large part of my life I didn't even have a category to see my idolatry and internal sinfulness. You see, I was "good" and had no idea how much I needed to get my story straight.

Being declared right is not just what happens upon salvation; being declared right is my label, and the lenses I must filter all of my thoughts about myself—fears, worries, insecurities, struggles and doubts—and the world. Wearing this label assures me of my standing in Christ as accepted and loved, holy and righteous, forgiven and free. This means he thinks I'm awesome! Why in the world then would I try to prove myself, or work to make others think I'm great? My identity is secure in Him, just as I am.

How this plays out practically looks like this: if one of my children does something "bad," I am free from worrying about what you think of me as a mom. If I see social media pictures of a Girls' Night Out I wasn't apart of, I don't have to consume myself over why I wasn't invited. If I forget to do something I was supposed to, I don't have to beat myself up for my failure. When I sin, I am free to call it what it is instead of justifying it. Of course none of this means I get this perfectly or don't ever struggle to believe what he says about me is true. I am, and always will be, in constant need of his grace to reorient my thinking instead.

Another grace blessing in seeing he is perfect for me, is seeing he is also perfect for you! So not only am I more free of myself, I am growing in my compassion and grace for others. Living under the smile of God instead of fearing His or others' constant judgment, or acting as judge myself, is freedom that has led to greater contentment and joy, and Silly Club membership too.