

Study 1: Freed to Serve God

Read: Romans 3:9–26

Memory Verse: Romans 3:23

The Big Idea

To understand why God accepts us and how this acceptance should affect our attitude toward ourselves, others, and God.

Start Here

Most of us care about what other people think of us. We might change the way we dress, talk, act, or even the things we enjoy because we want other people to like us.

Sometimes we can treat God the same way.

We may think, "If I'm a good Christian, pray enough, read my Bible, obey my parents, and don't mess up, then God will be pleased with me."

But the gospel tells us something very different.

Read Romans 3:9–26

Paul begins by explaining a difficult truth: **every person has sinned**. None of us can make ourselves right with God by being good enough.

Romans 3:23 says:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

That means your sin isn't just a problem other people have. **It's your problem too**. And it's my problem.

But Paul doesn't stop there.

He explains that we can be **justified freely by God's grace through Jesus Christ**. We don't earn it. We don't deserve it. God gives it to us because of what Jesus has done.

Think about that for a moment:

God's love isn't a reward for good behavior.

Jesus died for you while you were still a sinner. Your relationship with God doesn't begin with you becoming good enough. It begins with God's grace.

Talk About It

1. When are you most tempted to worry about whether other people approve of you?
2. Do you ever feel like you have to be "good enough" for God to be pleased with you? Why?
3. How does knowing that Jesus has already paid for your sin change the way you think about yourself?

Live It Out

If we believe that God has accepted us through Christ, we don't have to spend our lives trying to prove ourselves.

That changes how we live.

We can obey God **because we love Him**, not because we're trying to earn His love.

And when we fail, we don't have to hide from God in shame. We can confess our sin, receive His forgiveness, and turn back to Him.

God's grace also changes how we treat other people. If God has forgiven us so much, we should be willing to forgive others.

Pray Together

Memory Verse

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."