



BIG IDEA

You don't have to earn God's love. You are made right with Him through Jesus—not through being perfect.

BIBLE

Philippians 3:4–9

ABOUT THIS WEEK

You don't have to earn your way to God—He already did the work through Jesus. When you trust in Christ, your identity isn't "what I've done," but "who I belong to." Real freedom comes from resting in grace, not striving for approval.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome back to Image Bearers!
- So far, we've talked about how we were made to reflect God, to create and bring peace, and to worship Him with our whole lives.
- But today's question might be the most personal one yet:
 - "Am I enough?"
- That's a question a lot of us think about more than we'd ever say out loud.
- And today, we're going to see how God answers it—not with pressure, but with grace.

HOOK – Trying to Earn It

- Have you ever tried really hard to impress someone—a coach, a teacher, a parent—and it still didn't feel like enough?
 - Maybe you studied like crazy but still didn't get the grade you wanted.
 - Maybe you helped around the house hoping for a compliment, and no one noticed.
 - That's a tough feeling. And sometimes, we treat God the same way.
 - We try to be "good enough" so He'll love us or bless us or notice us.
 - But here's the truth: God doesn't work on a point system. He works through grace.
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Paul's accomplishments

- Read **Philippians 3:4-9**
- **Philippians 3:4-9** is written by a guy named Paul.
- Before following Jesus, Paul was all about rule-following and reputation.
- He lists off all the reasons he could brag—his background, his religion, his accomplishments.
- But then in verse 7 he says,
 - "I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done."
- Paul realized something huge:
 - No amount of doing good could ever make him right with God.
 - Only Jesus could do that.
- In verse 9 he says, "I become righteous through faith in Christ."
 - That means being right with God isn't something you achieve.
 - It's something you *receive* by trusting Jesus.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

- Let's be real: middle school is full of pressure.
 - Pressure to be smart,
 - to be funny,
 - to fit in,
 - to be liked,
 - to not mess up.
- And in the middle of all that pressure, it's easy to start believing a lie
 - That your value comes from your performance.
 - So you try harder.
 - You act a certain way.
 - You hide parts of yourself.
 - You pretend you're okay even when you're not.
 - And sometimes, deep down, you wonder if God feels the same way—like maybe He'll love you more if you behave better or stop messing up.
- But that's not how grace works.
 - Grace says: "You don't have to be enough—because Jesus already is."
 - God's love isn't based on what you do. It's based on who He is.
- Here's the truth: God's love isn't based on how well you perform. It's based on what Jesus has already done for you.
- That's the Gospel.
 - Jesus didn't wait for you to have it all together.
 - He came to rescue you right in the middle of the mess.
 - He lived a perfect life because you couldn't.
 - He died on the cross to take the weight of your sin.
 - And He rose again to give you a new identity—one that says: You are forgiven. You are loved. You are free.
- Grace says: You don't have to be enough—because Jesus already is.
- And when you really believe that, you don't have to live like you're constantly trying to earn love. You can rest in the truth that you already have it.

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

- This week, when you mess up or feel like you're not enough, pause and remind yourself: "I'm already loved. I don't have to earn it."
 - You could even write that down on your mirror or notebook.
 - And if there's an area in your life where you're chasing approval—maybe from people or even from God—talk to Him about it.
 - Ask Him to help you trust His grace more than your performance.
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- When you live like you're already loved, it changes how you treat others too—because you don't need to compete or compare anymore.

Closing Prayer and Dismissal to Small Group

- "God, thank You that we don't have to earn Your love. Thank You that Jesus already did everything needed to make us right with You. Help us stop striving and start trusting. Teach us to live like we're already enough because of who You are. Amen."
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