

Pre-approved for God's Love  
Digging Deeper  
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For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

**Psalms 139:13-14 NIV**

Someone very special to me passed away early last month; someone who I had sadly lost touch with over the years but who nevertheless played a big part in me being healed from a difficult childhood and a legalistic church upbringing. His name was Jerry, and he was the singles pastor at the first church I attended after having given up on church in my youth. Jerry's ability to affirm, accept and love others unconditionally helped me and many others overcome feelings of not being good enough and get our life

headed in the direction God wanted us to go.

Before he died, Jerry asked the pastor who agreed to preside over his memorial service to focus his message on the second half of the gospel. That request was no surprise to those of us who knew Jerry well. As a singles pastor, and later a chaplain at a hospital ministering to mental health patients, Jerry had come to know many people who struggled with believing that they were not good enough. And he was well aware that to help them heal, he would have to go beyond helping them get to heaven and make sure that heaven got into them so they could pursue God's plan for their life.

All of us struggle from time to time with feelings of failure and low self worth. Some of that comes from pressure that others put on us to live up to unrealistic expectations. Most of the rest comes from pressure we put on ourselves. And all of it comes from not really believing that God loves us just as we are and not as we should be, and that is more than enough.

God's love isn't based on our performance, it's based on our brokenness. It is our brokenness that qualifies and pre-approves us for His love and His grace. God knows we're not perfect and He doesn't expect us to be (Mark 2:17). The question is, do we know that? Are we tuned in to what God says about us, or are we listening to the lies the world tells us and we tell ourselves (Romans 8:1-2)?

The second half of the gospel is really all about being transformed into the image of Christ and becoming the person that God has called us to be. It is a difficult journey to be sure; one that requires a lot of introspection, humility, submission, wisdom, courage and strength. It also requires a firm

belief that God loves us unconditionally and wants only the best for us.

But the journey is well worth it.

It liberates us from our past and helps us see and love ourselves the way God does.

It allows us to discover who we truly are in God's eyes and puts us on a path to fulfilling His purpose for our life.

It allows us to live life abundantly and not settle for less than what God wants for us.

And best of all, it leaves us feeling accepted, loved and worthy to receive the very best that life and God have to offer.

Are you ready?

Good! Let's talk about how to get started.

## **Reflect**

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## Pray

Heavenly Father, help me see myself through your eyes and know that I am fearfully and wonderfully made and good enough for anything you call me to do. Take away whatever sense of condemnation I might have and replace it with your love and your grace. Fill my heart with the joy that comes from knowing I am your child, my mind with thoughts of how valuable I am to you, and my soul with a deep down feeling of being worthy in your eyes.

Amen

## Discuss

How closely do you listen to what the world says about you and how you should live? Do you think a lot about what you have, how you look, and what others say about you? How often do you compare yourself to others?

How much time do you spend reading what God has to say about you? Do you read the Bible daily? Weekly? Once in a while? Not at all?

Which of the following verses best describe where you are? Which describe where you would like to be? What in your past is holding you back from seeing yourself as God sees you and what can you do to overcome that?

**People who believe that God loves them just as they are and not as they should be:**

## **Don't dwell on past or present failures**

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

**Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV**

## **Know they are forgiven**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

**1 John 1:9 NIV**

## **Understand and accept their own weaknesses**

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

**2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV**

## **Feel valued by God**

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

**Psalms 139:13-14 NIV**

## **Don't compare themselves to others**

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

**2 Corinthians 10:12 NIV**

## **Don't allow the past to control their future**

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 3:13-14 NIV**

## **Are the person God has called them to be**

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 1:10-11 NIV**