

DAY 4

His Acceptance

How can we consistently hear God's voice? We must take the focus off ourselves, looking instead to His glory and priorities, meditating on His attributes. To worship God appropriately, we also need to grasp His acceptance. As long as we feel condemned, we will have difficulty hearing God speak. Today we will see how Moses got a lesson on God's acceptance.

When God spoke, Moses hid his face (Ex. 3:6). In a way, I can relate to his reaction. When LifeWay first contacted me about writing this Bible study, I was intimidated. As my husband and I left the first meeting with the publishing team, I looked at him and exclaimed, "I can't do it!" I felt ill-equipped for the task. My husband, Jerry, encouraged me to talk to the Lord before making a decision.

Through Bible study and prayer, God affirmed that I was to take the challenge. But, like Moses, I felt I could never measure up to the task. The Lord has to continuously remind me that He is in control and will accomplish good things through me. Though we, like Moses, should approach the presence of God with humility, we must not hang our heads because we feel unacceptable or inadequate. Hebrews 10 explains why as Christians we are accepted by God. We will look at portions of this chapter in today's study.



DAILY BREAD

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people, to be seen by them.

Otherwise, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

Matthew 6:1

The Problem

List the things you like best about yourself.

Every year the Jewish people celebrated the Day of Atonement. On this day, the ceremonially cleansed priests entered the Holy of Holies and offered sacrifices for the sin of the people. The Holy of Holies was a sacred room in the tabernacle: it contained the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat that signified the very presence of God (see Ex. 25:22). Only the high priest, under great scrutiny, could go into this sacred room. Each year the priests would venture into this place with fear and trembling, offering sacrifices for the sins of the people.

The problem, however, was that the priests were also humans—they too sinned. In our own power we will always be inadequate. Only God's sacrifice of His Son for our sin makes us acceptable.

Why do the traits you just listed not make you acceptable to God?
(see Isaiah 64:6)

We are not made acceptable to God by *who* we are but by *Whose* we are. Jesus bridges the gap between our imperfection and His holiness (Eph. 2:8-9). Hebrews 10:14 tells us, “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.” The word *perfect* here does not mean “without sin” but rather “perfectly adequate.”² The death of Jesus on the cross is the only sacrifice ever needed for us to be acceptable and adequate in His sight.

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The Israelites continuously tried to find perfection, following the law and offering sacrifices, but they always came up short. Year after year they offered the same sacrifices, but the Day of Atonement and the offering of the blood of animals for the sin of the people was basically useless. No matter how often the people sacrificed, no matter how closely they tried to follow the law, they remained unacceptable to God.

In what ways have you, like the Old Testament saints, tried following the law to make yourself acceptable to God?

- a moral lifestyle religious activity prayer
- sacrificial giving confession other _____

Hear this incredibly liberating truth: you cannot make yourself acceptable to God. Hebrews 10:1-4 explains that the continued offering of bull and goat blood did not take away sins. You can be sure that whatever you are offering will not “perfect” you either.

The Solution

In the margin, list the things you like least about yourself.

Jesus is the Son of God. He makes us acceptable to God and gives us the right to claim God as our Father. As God’s adopted children, we each become “co-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). We become sons and daughters to God (2 Cor. 6:18).

How thankful I am to live on this side of the cross! By receiving the gift of salvation and because of Jesus’ blood we are forever accepted by God. We have a sure guarantee of our position with God—being right with God and living in relationship with Him forever.

According to Ephesians 2:6 what is our position once we become Christians?

According to Hebrews 7:22, what guarantees this covenant?

Why does the trait you like least about yourself not keep you from a standing of righteousness before God?

We no longer have to worry about our standing before God. We do not have to be concerned with whether or not He will receive our worship. By accepting the perfect sacrifice of Jesus for the remission of our sins, we can “have confidence to enter the holy place” (Heb. 10:19, NASB). The Old Testament saints did not have this right, but because of Jesus—you and I do! As Christians, we are completely acceptable to God. Nothing can change our standing before Him!

TAKE ACTION

Because God accepts us in Christ, we can approach God's throne with confidence (see Heb. 4:16). If you aren't certain you have received God's gift of eternal life, read the information that follows. If you already have a personal relationship with the Lord, spend some time in prayer, thanking Him for your salvation.

A relationship with God begins by admitting we are not perfect and continue to fall short of God's standards. Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The price for these wrongdoings is separation from God. But God provided a way to get rid of that separation by coming down to earth in the form of Jesus. When Jesus was crucified on the cross He provided a way to allow our sins to be forgiven and restore our relationship with God. God doesn't ask us to clean up our lives before we come to Him. He wants us to come as we are, receiving Him as Savior and Lord.

Forgiveness begins when we admit our sin to God. When we do, He will forgive us and restore our relationship with Him. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

This love gift and relationship with God is not just for a special few but for everyone. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

If you want a personal relationship with the Lord, pray this prayer:

Jesus, I am sorry for the things I have done wrong. I thank You for dying on a cross for me. I am willing to turn away from anything that displeases You in my life and from this day on I want to live my life Your way. I invite You to come into my life now and make me a new person. Thank you, Jesus.

If you just prayed this prayer, share your experience with your small-group facilitator, someone in your group, your pastor, or a trusted Christian friend. Continue to grow in your new relationship through reading the Bible, talking to God through prayer, and fellowshiping with other Christians. Welcome to God's family!