

MEMORY VERSE

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

Galatians 3:21



DAY 1 -- GOD'S STORY = THE GOOD STORY

READ Galatians 2:15-16.

*To be justified is to be accepted by God, declared righteous, and in right relationship with God. It's the foundation on which we begin a lifelong relationship with God. **READ** the verses again and substitute the definition above for the word **justified**. **WRITE** out the verses as you do this.*

What do they say about God's story? What do they teach about observing the law and trying to earn/work our way to being accepted by God?

Is it possible to do that?

DAY 2

READ Galatians 2:19-21 and Romans 3:22-24.

According to God's story in the Scriptures, who can be justified?

How are we justified? Is this a new concept? If so, how does this change your understanding of God's story? Do you believe this and trust it as truth?

Consider this story:

Imagine two rock climbers working together. One falls and will die if he isn't rescued. The top climber drops a rope to save him. No matter how strong the rope, if he doesn't grab it, he's dead. The bottom climber responds and grasps the rope. If there was no rope, no matter how strong his grasp, he can't be saved.

*Having faith in Christ is **NOT** simply acknowledging and believing what Jesus did for our salvation (acknowledging the rope has been provided), it's taking hold of the rope as our complete lifeline.*

How does the Apostle Paul describe this faith in Christ (Galatians 2:19-21)? How would you describe the kind of faith you have in Christ? Is it dependent on your own good intentions, good deeds, or adherence to a moral code? If so, how are you doing? What if you had the kind of faith in Christ the Apostle Paul writes about?

PRAY: *Ask God to reveal any attitudes, thoughts, and/or behaviors present in your life which undermine your faith in Christ, and in Him alone. Confess any fears or doubts you may have about the acceptance He provides to those who put their faith and trust in Christ.*

DAY 3 -- ANOTHER STORY

Read Galatians 3:2-6 and 10-13.

*The Apostle Paul relates observing the law, following the rules, or seeking to do enough good things, as living under a curse: **trying to attain a level***

***we can never reach**. **DESCRIBE** what it would feel like if our only hope for God's acceptance was dependent on obtaining perfection in our hearts and actions. What words come to mind?*

READ *through the verses again. **DESCRIBE** the situation which has Paul frustrated and bewildered. To draw from the rock climbing metaphor, the Galatians had fallen (as we all have) and had taken hold of the rescue rope provided in Christ. They tied that rope around themselves and were learning to live in relationship with God. But then, they set it aside and returned to following laws and regulations to earn acceptance from God - back to living under a curse.*

Even though the Galatians had heard, believed, and put their faith in Christ, they struggled to rely on His redemptive work to provide the way for a relationship with God. They began to believe that in order to be accepted by God they needed to follow some religious obligation or ritual (in this particular situation: circumcision). Can you relate to this type of thinking? Have you or do you struggle with this concept? If so, what has that concept done to your faith? To your relationship with God?

DAY 4

Do you ever struggle to believe that God's power can work in you?

Maybe you believe it for others, but knowing your own heart, your own history, your own struggles, you have a hard time believing it true for you.

READ Romans 8:1-3 and Ephesians 1:15-23.

What do these verses say about those who have been justified in Christ? About God's power and ability to do what He's promised?

PERSONALIZE *the prayer in Ephesians. **PRAY** for yourself and for someone who needs to be encouraged to rely/trust in Jesus' work on the cross.*

DAY 5

We've looked at God's story of Faith in Christ and another story:

a story of self-effort, legalism, works, and living under a curse.

What would it be like to live another story (LAW) in which you try to receive acceptance by doing good, working for approval and recognition, trying to please others, seeking acceptance through religious obligations and rituals, and following rules. Then there's the guilt from not quite making it. Condemned.

What about living God's story? Free. Forgiven and justified.

Accepted. Declared to be in a right relationship with God.

In community with God. At peace. Blessed.

READ *each of the descriptive words above. Add more words to the list.*

CIRCLE *those with which you identify. In what story are you living today? Are you in the story you want to be living?*

END *your time today by writing out our two memory verses thus far - Galatians 3:21 and Galatians 5:1.*

PRAY *these verses as a commitment to God.*

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