

Objective: The One Who Loves (I am Beloved. I don't need to earn)

Our theme for 2017 is Write Your Story. We want you to write a great story by the end of 2017 in every aspect of your life, whether it's your study, your relationship, your parenting, your family, your health, your financial, your ministry, and many more. To help you in writing your best story, we want to equip you with the solid truth from the Bible.

This week we will learn **The One who loves, that we are beloved in Christ and we don't need to earn any favor or anything good that comes from God.** The truth is once we believed in Jesus as our true and only savior, there is a spiritual exchange that happens in that instant. We are then no longer called as slave but as children of God, we are adopted as His sons and daughters and hence we become His heir in this world and also later in heaven. That comes only by faith alone without any good works that merit us to earn from the Father. This assurance will give us the freedom that God knows what's best for us and will never be late in taking care of us whether we are doing well or not so well in our lives. Therefore, when we experience and live in this truth, the right response of faith when it comes to treat others is we will have the freedom to give people space and time in their journey. We don't let people earn (don't give what they deserve, but what they need).

WELCOME

Name Bingo

You'll need to create a name bingo sheet, so basically a 4 x 4 or 5 x 5 grid of personal statements. For example, "has long hair" or "has more than 5 siblings" or "has travelled overseas" etc

Hand these people bingo sheets out to each person and give them a pen, and then send them off to mingle and find people that fit in the gaps. Each player can only use another person once on their sheet. So the game can either finish when someone collects a name for the entire grid.

Alternatively, the game can continue and bingo can be played after everyone has completed their grids. So a leader would start reading out the names of the youth group kids and then they would need to cross off a name when it has been called - if they get 4 in a row - they win!

You could use this several different ways. You could make up a grid with the names of the people who are regulars to your youth group and leave a few blank spaces to add visitors names-use as an ice breaker to help everyone get to know each other or you could use it with the book of the Bible--put on grid in order so they will get use to seeing them in order and they could learn the books of the Bible this way. And play either one the way you would play regular bingo-

You can combine this with Bible questions. Such as "someone who can name the 5 major prophets of the Old Testament." "Someone who has memorized at least 10 Bible verses." "Someone who has not missed Sunday school in over a month." etc. So it was a nice combination of things about them, goes to the same school, likes to walk barefoot in mud, does not like amusement park rides, etc.

WORSHIP

Take time to pray for one another and let the Spirit move free.

WORD

Ephesians 1:6 *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.*

“God loves you just as you are and not as you should be.” That’s the gospel of grace in one sentence!

Manmade religion says you have to clean yourself up before you approach the Lord, but grace shouts, “Come as you are!” The good news is not “work hard and you might get accepted. (That’s not news and it’s certainly not good.) The good news is that Christ has accepted you! God has made us accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6).

In the covenant of grace, God takes all the initiative:

- He loves us first (1 John 4:19)
- He forgives us first (Col 2:13)
- He accepts us first (Rom 15:7)

...and all we can do is respond to what he has done.

You need to settle this in your heart. You are not a son or daughter because you avoid unclean things. You are a child of God because you have been adopted:

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. (Rom 8:15-16)

Live as a beloved and accepted child of God and you will never be seduced by the hollow promises of this world. You will be free!

Studies have shown that in the heart of every child is a cry for his father’s approval. Something happens when a father says to his boy, “Daddy is so proud of you.” Or when a father says to his girl, “You will always be Daddy’s favorite girl.”

You can catch such a similar special moment in the Bible when God the Father displayed His approval of His Son — “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) The Bible shows us that Jesus’ ministry began with the approval of the Father, even before He had performed any miracle.

Now, you may think that God would naturally say that of Jesus, but not of us. The truth is that Jesus came for us and as us. He died for us and as us. He received the approval of the Father for us and as us. He came as our representative. And if that is not enough, God tells us in His Word that we are “accepted in the Beloved”!

Why did God specifically say “accepted in the Beloved” and not simply “accepted in Christ”? It is because He is calling to our remembrance what had happened at the Jordan river where He said, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” God wants us to know that we are His beloved and that He is well pleased with us.

God sees us as His beloved because He has made us accepted in the Beloved. He wants us to wake up every day knowing that we are His beloved, unconditionally loved and wholly approved.

The more we know how much we are loved and treasured by God, the more we can expect good things to happen in our lives. We can expect to be healthy and whole. When we realize that we are the objects of God’s love, instead of becoming easily frightened or threatened by anything or anyone, we become confident that we will win every fight of life.

That is how your heavenly Father wants you to live. So live life today confident that you are God’s beloved!

This is the response of faith that we can show when we are expressing our love to others, by allowing them to experience Christ’s love through us. We love them because we are first loved, we forgive them because we are first forgiven, we accept them because we are first accepted, we bless them because we are first blessed, we value them because we are first valued.

Our expression of true love towards others can only be fruitful and multiplied when we are drawing from Him who first draw close to us. The same way Jesus loves us first, hence we love Him, that’s why we love others first.

WARMTH

1. Can you share what you have learned from today’s Word?
2. In your sentence, what does it mean that “God loves you just as you are and not as you should be.”?
3. To apply this truth, how do you want to do it to the people around you?

WORK

Take time to watch a sermon from Joseph Prince about: Accepted in the beloved, empowered to succeed (<https://youtu.be/qXSsh6vzybw>) in youtube this week.