

# good enough?

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We all want to be the best. We all want to be number one. But why in today's society does it feel like if you're not first you're last? There is an enormous amount of anxiety to be the smartest, the strongest, funniest, best looking, most accomplished, most talented. This anxiety seems to come from a belief that we need to be the best if we want to be anything at all. That if we are anything less, we lack all worth or value. We fear that if we aren't "good enough" than we won't be loved. This fear of being "good enough" seems to have spilt over into how we understand God's love. During this next series we will expose the misbeliefs that God only loves the best, that the better we are the more He loves us, and that we can also lose His love. Unpacking the reality of God's love for us will allow us to see that we all are "good enough."

## week 1: you can't lose it

Maybe you've really messed up. Maybe you've made some decisions that stink. Maybe the consequences of the things you have done are significant. But what if that voice inside your head telling you that you can't go back to how it was, that you can't ever be good enough, that you aren't worthy of love, what if that voice you hear is a lie? Looking at the story of the prodigal son we will begin to see that no matter where we are in our journey, no matter what has happened, we can always go home and that God will never stop loving us.

## scripture

*Luke 15:11-24*

Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'

"So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

"That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father.

"When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.'

"But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.

## questions

1. Do you or someone you know feel pressure to be the best or better than you currently are? Where do you think that pressure comes from?
2. Do you wish you could make that pressure or anxiety go away? Why?
3. Have you ever messed up in a big way? How did you feel after?
4. Have you ever lost the approval or love of someone you cared about? Was that a painful experience? Why?
5. If you believed you could never lose God's love, would your relationship with Him look differently?
6. Who in your life needs to be reminded of this message? How will you share it with them?

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## week 2: god loves you

It's been said that until you are a parent you can't fully understand what God's love is like. Once you're a parent you are able to realize how perfect and complete love can be, and how your child, through nothing they have done or will do, can ever be able to make you love them any more or less than you already do. Why is God's perfect love so difficult for us to grasp? How can God, who is perfect, love someone who is so imperfect? What does this kind of love mean for us?

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## questions

1. What about perfect love is the most challenging to understand?
2. Do you believe we can fully understand something you can't see?
3. Where in your life do you feel the most unconditional love?
4. Where in your life do you show the most unconditional love?
5. What do you think would change in this world if we all believed and felt God's unconditional and perfect love? Your school? Your home?
6. How can you begin to live in a way that demonstrates much God loves you?

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## week 3: different but equal

As an older brother, growing up I always felt like my younger brother got preferential treatment. I believed the way we were rewarded, disciplined and loved wasn't fair. In my opinion, he always got more or better than I did. Voicing this complaint to my father he simply responded, "I love you differently, but equally." How many of us feel discouraged or frustrated because we always seem to do everything right, yet don't seem to be loved as much as others who constantly make mistakes or screw up? I think we often feel this way about God. We believe the better we act, the more He should love us and help us. But God's love for us can't be earned. Understanding that God loves us all "differently, but equally" might help us learn to have security in the love we do receive and allow us to rejoice in the love He has for others.

## scripture

*Luke 15:25-32*

"All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.'

"The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!'

"His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!'"

## questions

1. Describe a time in your life where you felt like the older brother. How did that make you feel?
2. Who in your life are you most jealous of the love they receive?
3. Why do you think you feel this way?
4. What is missing from the love you receive? Do you feel it is inferior compared to others? Why?
5. What is keeping you from celebrating the love others experience?
6. How can you live differently tomorrow?

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## week 4: we love because...

Understanding that God loves us is crucial to recognizing our worth and value, but that is not where it should stop. We must in turn go out and share this type of love with others so that they too may come to understand that God loves them and that they are of value and worth also. Imagine what would this world look like if we all understood that God loves us and then shared that love with others. It would be heaven on earth, and isn't that why we are all here...

## scripture

*1 John 4:19-21*

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

*John 13:35*

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

## questions

1. How would this world be different if we all felt God's love? Your school?
2. Who in your life needs to feel God's love most? How can you help them feel His love?
3. Who in your family do you show the least amount of love? Why?
4. How could it bless them if they felt more of your love?
5. What will you do this week to begin to show others the love of God?