

The Confidence Gap

Study Guide - Week One: Acceptance



Begin by reading Luke 23:32-34. A major gap can exist in our confidence because we feel unworthy of God's forgiveness. Maybe we know we are forgiven, but we don't feel it yet. Often this is a result of replacing God's view of us with our own view of ourselves. In this study, we will try to see ourselves from God's perspective by paralleling Romans 5 and 6 with our message text from Luke 23. Each of our "confidence boosters" will be supported and discussed.

What Do You Think?

- As we consider our past sins, it is one thing to know in our head that we are forgiven; it is another to actually accept forgiveness. This is particularly true when the consequences or reminders of our failings still surround us. Have you ever struggled with *feeling* forgiven? Why?
- The way we respond to this tension varies from person to person. When you make a mistake, do you tend to deal with it internally or externally? Do you under-share or over-share? Are you a stuffer or a gusher? What are the pitfalls of each?

“And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”
Luke 23:34 (ESV)

What Does God Say?

- Confidence Booster: We have been given access to God.
Read Romans 5:1-5. Jesus has provided us with access to grace. When we are staring at our past and present sins, what does it mean to “stand” in grace? How does it give us peace and hope?
- Confidence Booster: Even though I deserve to die, Jesus still loves me and died for me.
Read Romans 5:6-8. According to this passage, for whom did Christ die and how does it demonstrate God's own love for us? What does this mean practically?



“More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” Romans 5:11 (ESV)

- Confidence Booster: Even though I've been an enemy of Jesus, He will still forgive me.
Read Romans 5:9-11. What does it mean to be an enemy of God? What does it mean to receive reconciliation? How does reconciliation create confidence? Be specific and give examples, if possible.

- Confidence Booster: God removes my regret.
Read Romans 6:1-10. How does knowing that your sin has been done away with help free you from guilt, shame, and regret? How does this help us to move forward and honor God?

What Will You Do?

- Is there a situation from your distant or recent past that you need to accept forgiveness for? Would you share it with the group? What do you need to do to feel forgiven?

- What are some things you can do daily to help you “stand” in grace so guilt and shame don't creep up on you?

- Has someone reached out to you that you know may be struggling with forgiveness? What will you do to help them see the forgiveness, peace, and hope they can experience through Jesus?

