

Dive! FBCD Women's Ministry  
*Dwell Differently* by Natalie Abbott and Vera Schmitz  
Chapter 5 (Truth When You Feel Unaccepted)  
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**"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God"** (Ephesians 2:8).

**Acceptance** = the action or process of being received as adequate or suitable, typically to be admitted into a group

- a favorable reception; to be welcomed or embraced; to be approved of
- Examples:
  - An applicant is accepted into a university.
  - A church member accepts the teachings of a particular church.
- can also mean mere toleration or sufferance (the absence of rejection instead of genuine approval)

### **THE BAD NEWS: WE ARE UNACCEPTABLE**

The Bible is clear in its teachings that God is holy and man is sinful.

- "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
- "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one" (Romans 3:10-12).
- "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (Ephesians 2:1-3).

In order to find the remedy, we must correctly diagnose the problem.

"The Christian gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time" (Tim Keller).

## THE GOOD NEWS: WE ARE ACCEPTED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—**by grace you have been saved**—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For **by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is **not your own doing**; it is **the gift of God**, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”  
(Ephesians 2:1-10).

- “...**by grace** you have been saved...”: This twice-repeated phrase is a radical departure from the works-based righteousness prevalent in both Jewish and pagan religious systems. Grace is the foundation of the Christian faith.
- “...**through faith**. And **this** is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”: Even faith is not a human achievement but a gift from God. God is the initiator and sustainer of our salvation.
  - Thankful Response: “From the first day we believed, we should wake up every morning with overflowing thankfulness to God that we believe in Jesus” (John Piper, *Providence*, 540).
- “...you **have been saved**...”: perfect tense in Greek, indicating a completed action with ongoing effects
  - past, present, and future implications
    - **Justification**: one-time event in the past; positional righteousness
    - **Sanctification**: ongoing process; practical righteousness
    - **Glorification**: future fulfillment; actual righteousness
  - permanence and assurance of salvation

We never outgrow the gospel in our Christian walk. “The gospel is not the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom but the way we make all progress in the kingdom” (Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*).

## THE RESULT: WE HAVE RICHES TO BEHOLD AND WORKS TO DO

**Riches to Behold:** "...so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

- **immeasurable** = beyond ordinary or expected limits; beyond human comprehension; overwhelmingly abundant
- It will take eternity for us to discover and enjoy the immeasurable riches of God's grace! Dive and dive again!
- "Unfathomable oceans of grace are in Christ for you. **Dive and dive again**, you will never come to the bottom of these depths. How many millions of dazzling pearls and gems are at this moment hid in the deep recesses of the ocean caves" (Robert Murray M'Cheyne).

**Works to Do:** "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

- We are not called to occasional acts of good works but to a continuous lifestyle of good works.

**"My deepest reality is that I belong to God;** I am his friend. And that is more than enough" (Vera Schmitz, *Dwell Differently*, 87).