

GAY, LESBIAN, GOD'S LOVE

The message many gays and lesbians hear is that God hates you. See why this is not true.

By Marilyn Adamson

Life often demands certain qualifications. To get a driver's license, you have to pass a test. To land a certain job, you must show that you have the credentials deserving of that job.

If "A," then "B." Prove you are worthy. Prove you have qualified. Prove you are "acceptable."

At what point can you know that God fully accepts you?

Unlike anything else you have encountered, a relationship with God does not begin with you filling in the blank, "Accept me because..."

It starts with God saying, "I accept you." "I welcome you."

Whether you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or have questions, God is not our enemy. If you have not already begun one, God wants a relationship with you. He offers this to anyone and everyone.

In Scripture, you'll see only one group that consistently angered Jesus...the religious self-righteous.

Jesus seemed okay with everyone else, including prostitutes and criminals. However, the religious elite irritated and saddened Jesus. He saw them as judgmental, arrogant, unloving, and hypocritical.

You might see those words and immediately think of religious people who have been hurtful, rude or judgmental toward you. Does that represent Jesus' heart? No. Jesus said to love your neighbor as yourself. How would hurtful comments fit into that? Not very well.

This is Jesus' heart revealed. He said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."¹

Have you ever had a chance to seriously consider Jesus?

Unlike any other person who has ever lived, Jesus can explain life to you...how to experience life, more abundantly. He is the Creator of all that exists, yet became a man, so that we could know him, know God.

John, one of Jesus' friends, made this comment about Jesus, "For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."²



"Grace" isn't a word we use much. It means God's kindness given to us, without us earning it. Jesus offers us both his kindness and truth, to guide us through this often-confusing life.

I used to wonder what it takes to be accepted by God. Perhaps you'll be as amazed as I was. Here it is:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."³

Did you catch it? "Whoever believes in him." Whoever believes in him has eternal life. Whoever believes in him is saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned.

This is what he asks of us...to believe in him.

John said of Jesus, "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..."⁴

He was not just a prophet or teacher or religious leader. Jesus said that to know him was to know God. To believe in him was to believe in God. This is what led to his crucifixion. They charged him with blasphemy. The people said that Jesus was "calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."⁵

He offered proof. Jesus had already done what no human could do, instantly healing those who were blind, couldn't walk, or who struggled with diseases.

Yet Jesus went far beyond that. He said, on numerous occasions, that he would be arrested, beaten, and crucified...and three days later rise from the dead. That's pretty solid proof. No reincarnation later, no mystical "you'll see me in your dreams." No. Three days after being buried, he would rise from the dead.

The Romans knew about this so they posted an entire guard of soldiers at Jesus' tomb.

However, three days after being tortured and killed on a cross, Jesus physically rose from the tomb. His body was gone, and only the grave clothes that he had been buried in were left. Jesus physically showed up numerous times over the next 40 days. This is what started the Christian faith. He proved that he was all that he claimed to be...God in the flesh, equal with God the Father.

Jesus was clear about it: "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."⁶

You might wonder, "Okay. Eternal life is great. But what about now, in this life?"

You can go through this life knowing you are loved by God.

Everyone hungers to be loved. Human love is important. Yet every person who loves you, loves you

imperfectly, because people are imperfect.

But God is able to love you perfectly. He loves us because it is his nature to love, and it never changes, never stops.

We all mess up. We all fail to live up to our own standards, let alone God's standards. But God doesn't accept us based on our performance. He accepts us if we will simply believe in him, come to him, invite him to be God in our lives.

This is how Jesus describes having a relationship with him:

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."⁷

What happens if you take him up on it? What happens if you begin a relationship with God?

Any significant relationship you have had in your life has had an effect on you, either positively or negatively. Right? This is true for everyone. The more important the relationship, the greater impact it has.

So, it makes sense that knowing God is going to be a significant relationship. He will lead your life according to his love and his desires for your life. You still make decisions. You maintain your free will. He does not take over your life, forcing you to act as he wants. Yet, I found myself deeply impressed by his wisdom, his kindness, and the way God views people and life.

God is not going to take his cues from what society dictates. God, who created the universe, doesn't really need society to guide him, does he? I like that. I find that freeing.



Here's what God did in my life, when I began a relationship with him.

I had been an atheist. Believing in God, reading the Bible about him, was a major shift in my life. It was monumental, actually.

A couple of months after asking Jesus into my life, my closest friend asked me, "Have you noticed a change in your life?" And I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Lately I can share things with you and you don't make jokes. You seem to be really listening to me."

I was kind of embarrassed. I mean, here's my closest friend telling me that I was finally acting like a decent human being and listening to her!

(She was so amazed by what she was noticing in my life, that she decided to ask Jesus into her life also.)

Here's what I think was happening in my life.

When I began a relationship with God, I became very aware of his love for me. It really surprised me. Things I would read in the Bible were like personal messages from God to me about how much he loved me. (I grew up thinking God was pretty mad at us, for not measuring up.) So this was amazing to me - that God loves us.

And I guess my emotional need for love was met by God on such a deep level, that I became more of an emotionally secure person. I started thinking more, caring more about other people, than about myself. And evidently I became a better listener and more caring. I also found the racial bigotry I was raised in subsiding.

Jesus promises us that as we let him teach us and guide us, he says, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."⁸

If you begin a relationship with Jesus, you might see changes in your attitudes, or hopefulness, or how you view others, or how you spend your time. Only God knows. But as you get to know him, he will impact your life. Ask anyone who follows Jesus, and they'll tell you how knowing him has affected their life.

He tends to give us greater desire to choose his ways. How he does this is unexpected. It isn't like he gives you a new set of commands that you must now follow. This isn't self-effort or you performing for God. And it isn't religious dedication. It is a relationship, an intimate friendship with God. It is God personally leading you and teaching you about himself, about life. He enters our lives when we invite him in. He affects our lives, from the inside out, at a heart level.

Jesus offers you more of life. You know how relationships, jobs, sports, entertainment...all of it has great moments, yet the fulfillment is often fleeting. The satisfaction of it does not keep us full. And nothing on earth ever will.

We have a constant hunger for something that lasts, that's reliable. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." He finishes his statement with, "...whoever comes to me I will never cast out." I searched for years for a philosophy of life that would always work, in any situation. When I came to know God, my search ended. I found him to be trustworthy.

Your relationship with him is going to look different than anyone else's relationship with him. You are an individual with unique experiences, thoughts, interests, dreams, needs. Read the Gospels and you'll see Jesus relating to individuals...as individuals.

I'm concerned at this point that I'm showing you only the upside of knowing God.

A relationship with God is no guarantee that you will be shielded from really hard things in life. You might go through financial stress, serious illness, accidents, earthquakes, relationship heartaches, etc.

There is no question that there is suffering in this life. You can go through it alone. Or you can be certain of God's love, his presence and intimacy, in the midst of it.

Here's another caution. He might lead you into some really challenging careers, at personal sacrifice, in order to care for others.

Most of Jesus' disciples (and many of Jesus' followers today) have gone through tremendous suffering. For example, Paul was frequently arrested, beaten with rods and whipped, countless times. Once he was nearly stoned to death by an angry mob. He was shipwrecked several times, many days without food, and fleeing for his life, often.

Clearly, Jesus' followers didn't live easy lives. Yet Paul, and other believers, remained unshakably convinced of God's love for them.

Paul writes, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹⁰

You don't plan your course. If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or questioning your sexuality...if you will let him, Jesus will guide your life. And it's greater than what you could imagine. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."¹¹

Here's how you can begin a relationship with God, right now.

Whatever you've done in your life, Jesus offers you his complete forgiveness. Our sin wasn't merely overlooked. It was paid for, by Jesus on the cross, sacrificing himself in our place.

Have you ever had someone sacrifice for you? This is what Jesus did to the ultimate degree. He loves you that much. He offers to enter your heart and establish a relationship with you.

Would you like to know God? I would encourage you to let him into your life, if you haven't already. He says that THIS is the relationship that satisfies us. We never were meant to go through this life without him.

You can talk to him using whatever words you want. If you need help, here's what you might say:

"Jesus, I believe in you. Thank you for dying for me and offering me a relationship with you. I want you to be God in my life, I want to know you, experience your love, and right now, I ask you to lead my life."

(1) Matt 11:28-29 (2) John 1:16,17 (3) John 3:16-18 (4) John 1:11,12 (5) John 5:18 (6) John 5:22-24 (7) John 15:9-12 (8) John 8:32 (9) John 6:35,37 (10) Romans 8:37-39 (11) John 8:12