

FILTERS

PART 1: THE PERFORMANCE FILTER

INTRODUCTION

In a performance culture, you get what you deserve. That creates the message that success comes to those who work hard and perform well. But what happens when we apply a performance filter to our faith?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree or disagree that we live in a performance culture? What evidence do you see that supports your perspective?
2. Have you experienced a relationship with someone with whom you felt the pressure to perform in order to be accepted? What words would you choose to describe that relationship?
3. Many of us have felt pressure to measure up to God's standards. Applying a performance filter to our relationship with God can leave us feeling exhausted or excluded. And it can make us judgmental toward others. When have you felt exhausted or excluded in your faith? Has a performance filter ever made you judgmental? If so, what happened?
4. **Read Philippians 3:4–9.**
Paul cited his resume to a Jewish crowd that would have been impressed with his credentials. He then stated that he considered all of his heritage and accomplishments garbage compared with finding Christ. How do you think this performance-based culture would have responded to his words?
5. **Read Ephesians 2:8–9.**
Paul made a shift from a performance filter to a grace filter by accepting that grace is getting what you don't deserve. In what ways is it challenging for you to fully embrace a grace perspective as it relates to your relationship with your heavenly Father?
6. In photography, when a filter distorts an image to make it unrecognizable, we discard the photo. While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us. You can't earn it. You don't deserve it. You just receive it. What steps do you need to take to throw your performance filter (trying to earn God's forgiveness, approval, or acceptance) in the trash? How can you embrace a "grace filter" in your life?

MOVING FORWARD

For the next seven days, watch for ways you are tempted to view God through a performance filter. In those moments, choose to embrace a grace filter and reflect God's grace to those around you.

WEEKLY READING

This week, reflect on these truths that apply to the grace God has offered to us through Jesus...

You can't earn it...Ephesians 2:4-9

You don't deserve it...Romans 5:6-8

You just receive it...John 3:16-17