



PART 6: How Dare We!

INTRODUCTION

The church isn't an exclusive club. It can't keep people out whom Jesus invited in . . . and he invited *everyone*. But if the message of the church is for everyone, why is church culture so often an obstacle to people?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about your friendships growing up. Were you selective in choosing your friends or did you just gravitate toward those who accepted you? Explain.
2. Have you had the experience of being at a church where you didn't fit into the culture? How did that affect your view of the church and Christians? How did it influence your relationship with God?
3. Read Romans 3:21–24. Why is it so difficult for us to accept that God's grace doesn't depend on our behavior? How would the church be different if Christians lived as though these verses were true?
4. During the message, Andy said, "*A right standing with God is available from God through Christ to everyone who believes.*" How does that statement challenge you? How is it comforting?
5. What is one group of people you tend to want to keep out of the church? What is it about that group that makes you want to keep them on the outside?
6. What is one thing you can do this week to begin to change your heart and mind about those outside the church? What can this group do to support you?

MOVING FORWARD

If the message of the church is for everybody, we dare not create a church culture that is an obstacle to anybody. What if the church remembered that forgiven people find it easier to forgive, loved people find it easier to love, accepted people find it easier to accept, and sinners who've been forgiven of sin find it easier to abandon their sin? Imagine what might happen in our communities if church culture got out of the way of the gospel.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

Romans 3:25