



## The Norm Series

## Part 2 - "What Makes Normal"

Small Group Material

March 19th, 2017

Leader Guide

**Bottom Line:** *When you identify the impact of the Gospel on your story, you'll begin to see your story within God's story.*

**Study Verses:** *Romans 3:21-24, Romans 5:18-19-23, Romans 6:19 and Luke 7:36-50*

**Define The Win:** *Group members would be able to articulate the impact the Gospel has had on their own story. They would understand they've been justified by God and it is this justification that enables them to walk in forgiveness. Participants would understand the difference between justification and sanctification.*

### Key Points

- *God will continue to mold and shape us until we are totally free from our rebellious ways.*
- *When you feel unworthy, you will use your behavior to prove your worth. When you feel guilty, you will use your behavior to even the scales.*
- *Justification is the foundation for forgiveness to be whole and complete.*
- *The implications of someone having a solution means there must be a problem.*
- *Everyone gets made right the same way.*
- *Redemption means that everything gets used, both the good and the bad.*

- *Justification (We are made RIGHT!) Sanctification (We become RIGHT!)*
- *You are saved by faith, not by how sanctified you are.*
- *Faith expresses itself through love.*

### ENCOUNTER

- What makes you doubt Christ's forgiveness for you? When this doubt creeps in, how do you tend to react to feelings of unworthiness and guilt?
- Why is difficult for many of us to admit there is problem that we don't have a solution for? How do pride, shame and guilt influence our approach to the Gospel?
- Everyone gets made right the same way. Deep down inside, do you believe this is fair? Why or why not? What makes you answer in the way that you do?

### FORMATION

- Read Romans 3:21-24 and Romans 5:18-19. What does it mean that we been justified in God's sight? How did our justification and redemption come about? If we don't understand we are justified, what drives our motives for change and transformation?
- Read Romans 6:19-23. In this passage, two types of slavery are mentioned (slave to sin and slave to righteousness). What are the major differences between the two? How is it possible that being a slave to righteousness leads to freedom and life? How does this passage speak to those who view walking with Christ as restrictive?
- Read Luke 7:36-50. What did Jesus want the Pharisees to understand through the telling of this story? How is our ability to love others tied to our understanding of God's forgiveness? What would you say to someone who thinks their story isn't important because they lead a "normal life" and they don't have "much to be forgiven of"?

### EXPRESSION

- What impact has the Gospel had on your own story? How has understanding this impact influenced your ability to see your story as part of God's story?
- What aspect of the Gospel are you drawn to the most (forgiveness, reconciliation, hope, freedom, etc.)? Why does this aspect speak to you?
- What has Christ done for you? What are you going to do with what Christ has done? What would it look like to walk in the reality of what Christ has done?

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *When someone offers you a solution they are implying a problem exists. If this is true, then it is important we reflect on what happens when Jesus shows up on the scene and the words that He speaks. If the Gospel offers freedom, it implies we're trapped. If the Gospel provides reconciliation, it sheds light on something being separated. If the Gospel gives us life, it means without it we are walking dead. The implications of these truths are staggering.*

*Our reaction to these statements is often pride, guilt, shame, indifference or a feeble attempt to control. When we feel unworthy, we will use our behavior to prove our worth. When we feel guilty, we will use our behavior to even the scales. We attempt to make things right by our own effort.*

*Then we encounter the message of Christ's forgiveness and love. We've been justified by what Christ has done on our behalf. Justification is the foundation for forgiveness to be whole and complete. It means we've been made right. Our debt has been paid. What we owed has been handled.*

*Because we've been justified, the choice is ours whether we will have the courage to walk in this reality. We are justified the moment we accept Christ's gift, yet our sanctification is a life-long process. This is where we are formed into Christ's likeness. We are saved by faith, not by how sanctified we are. If we fail to understand the power of justification, what motivates our behavior will be the same emotions we felt before our initial encounter: guilt, fear, shame and a stubbornness to prove our worth. God will continue to mold and shape us until we are totally free from our rebellious ways.*

*The same hope is offered to us all. It doesn't matter if you are big or tall, black or white, rich or poor, the beauty of the Gospel is that everyone is welcome. Everyone gets made right the same way. However, our unique story influences the way we encounter and are drawn to the Gospel.*

*Every person has a story. Life is a journey that takes us down countless paths. We encounter different circumstances. We deal with different struggles. We have unique scars and wounds.*

*For someone who left a string of broken relationships and poor choices in their wake, they key in on Christ's forgiveness. For someone who has been disappointed by others, they cling to God's faithfulness. For an individual who had unspeakable things happen to them, they cherish that Christ makes them clean and has the power to redeem all things.*

*The same message, a different experience. This week we want you to pause and ask: What does the Gospel mean to you? How has an encounter with Christ's love shaped your own story? What are you going to do about what Christ has done? When you find these answers and are able to articulate them it frees you to see your story as a part of God's story.*