

GOD SHOWS US OUR NEED  
FOR HIS MERCY**BIG TRUTH: GOD SHOWS US OUR NEED FOR HIS MERCY**

Psalms 14:1-3; Matthew 5:43-48; 18:32-35; Romans 3:9-10

**BIBLE VERSE: JAMES 2:13B**

"Mercy triumphs over judgment."

**BIG IDEAS**

- There is nothing we can do to earn God's mercy.
- We must understand our need for mercy before we can receive mercy.
- God opens our eyes to see our need for mercy.
- God gives mercy to those who do not deserve it.

**BIBLE STORY: LUKE 18:9-14**

Jesus shares a parable about two men and their very different prayers. One man, the Pharisee, congratulates himself in his prayer for not being a sinner. He then goes on to talk about all of the religious activities that he participates in. The other man, a tax collector, could not even lift his eyes to heaven because he knew how unworthy he was to even look at heaven. His prayer was a declaration of his unworthiness of God's mercy. The truth Jesus taught through this parable is the truth that we are all undeserving of God's great mercy, yet God still gives His mercy to us.

**FOUNDATION: GOD IS JUST - GOD GIVES MERCY**

Every decision that God makes is perfect and completely just. He is a good judge who cannot and does not allow evil to go unpunished. This means that God must punish injustice. The problem that we all face is that we are unjust sinners. We deserve justice. God's justice is why we need a substitute, and He sent Jesus to become that substitute. Instead of justice, those who place their faith in Jesus receive mercy.

**BIG AIMS****Every child should know:**

- God's justice means He always does what is right
- God's mercy means that he does not give us what we deserve

**Every child should feel:**

- Thankful because God shows us mercy when we do not do what is right

**Every child should be able to:**

- Think about the decisions they have to make in light of what God says is right and wrong
- Obey God because He always does what is right

**Every child should want to:**

- To trust God and to obey Him because He is just

The Family Devotion on the next page is a weekly tool for the home. It is designed for you as family to gather for a few minutes on a set night of the week to unpack the Big Truth together. Use the model below and customize it to fit your family. As you continue to learn, love, and live out the Big Truth, some additional Hooks (next page) are provided that correspond to the Big Aims (see above). Use them to keep the conversation going throughout the week with your family.

GOD SHOWS US OUR NEED  
FOR HIS MERCY**WE CAN'T EARN GOD'S MERCY**

Draw a line in your driveway or on a sidewalk using sidewalk chalk. Ask your child to walk on the line never stepping off of the line. They can only use one foot. They have to hold the other foot off of the ground. If they can stay on the line until the end, they'll get a special treat. When they can't stay on the line, share the special treat with them anyway. God's mercy cannot be earned, but God still shares His mercy with us.

**DISCOVER IT:**

Read James 2:10-13b.

**THINK ABOUT IT:**

There is no person who can do everything exactly right. No one can be perfect because we aren't perfect. James explained this in his letter to the scattered Jews. Even if we kept all of God's law except for one part, we'd still be guilty. It's the same if we pour a glass of milk and then place a tiny piece of dirt in the glass of milk. We won't drink the milk because there is a piece of dirt in the glass. When we fail to do even one of God's commands, we are guilty. Because of our sinfulness, we can never earn God's mercy. We could do a lot of good things for our entire lives, but we will still sin and we will still do wrong things. God still gives His mercy to us, though! He doesn't wait until we do things exactly right. He gives us mercy when we don't deserve His mercy.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

- Why can we not earn mercy? (We are sinful and no one does every single thing right. We make mistakes and do wrong things.)
- Does God still show us mercy? (Yes. He still shows us mercy even though we don't deserve it.)



As a family memorize James 2:13b. Share with your child how you came to understand your need for God's mercy and how God showed you mercy.



Cut out several small pieces of paper. On the paper write different types of behaviors, such as lying, sharing, letting someone go first, not hitting back, disobeying, etc. Spend some time with your child separating the pieces of paper into a pile of behaviors that show mercy and a pile of behaviors that don't show mercy. Talk with your child about how we should show mercy to others because God shows mercy to us.



Throughout the week, practice showing mercy to family members when they don't deserve it. Help your child show mercy to a friend or sibling when the friend or sibling doesn't deserve it. Talk with your child about how God shows mercy when we don't deserve it.



As a family sing "Holy, Holy, Holy". Talk with your child about what it means that God is "merciful and mighty". Share about how God has shown you mercy.