



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Haters / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

Even when you fail, He’s for you.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to embrace the fact that God is kind toward them—He is for them, not against them.

SCRIPTURE

God’s law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God’s wonderful grace became more abundant (Romans 5:20 NLT).

Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? (Romans 2:4 NLT).

*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and **we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ** (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV, emphasis added).*

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

In his letter to the church in Rome, Paul tells us why God gave humanity the law, and it wasn’t to make us hate ourselves or feel worthless. In fact, God gave us the law to show us how far

we are from perfect. Paul also tells us what happens when we continually sin and come up short: Grace abounds. This wasn’t just true for the church in Rome; it’s true for us today, too.

Paul tells us that God gives us grace, but that still doesn’t explain how God *feels* toward us when we sin. Thankfully, Paul tells us in Romans 2 that God’s not angry or hateful toward us when we sin. Instead, He’s patient, tolerant, and kind.

Finally, in his letter to the church in Corinth, Paul tells the Corinthians—and us—to take every thought captive, making each thought obedient to Christ. Making every thought obey Christ means looking to Christ alone for what’s true and right. In other words, it means thinking the way Christ thinks. And if God extends tolerance, patience, and kindness when He thinks about us and our sin, we should do the same with our own thoughts about ourselves.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

In this series, we’ve been talking about a few of the finer points of hating.

Here’s the reality: We all have the potential to be haters.

There’s another person we all have a tendency to hate on that we haven’t spent as much time talking about. And that person is you.



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TEACHING OUTLINE

TENSION

Not only do we tend to hate on ourselves, we tend to hate on ourselves *more* than anyone else. I think there are two main reasons for this:

1. We spend more time with ourselves than anyone else.
2. While we see issues in other people with generalities, we see our own issues with the precision of a molecular microscope.

If we're personally disappointed in us, then God must be *really* disappointed in us. So clearly, when a perfect God sees how imperfect we are, He's not happy about it.

This view of God can cause us to believe this: God may be our biggest hater.

I actually have some awesome news, and it's this: God is actually not like this at all!

TRUTH

Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul was a rock star of the early church.

It would be safe to say that Paul started out as a Christian-hater!

Once Paul encountered Jesus and realized the true nature of God, it wasn't possible for him to stay the same.

Paul is making a huge statement here. There are two parts:

1. The laws of God weren't put in place to make people feel worthless.
2. When we sin, God's grace is always more than enough.

That makes God gracious. Not a hater.

To sum up what Paul is saying: Even when you fail, He's for you.

APPLICATION

Once you get how infinitely good God truly is, it's a game changer.

So how can we move from knowing this truth about God to actually *living* in light of it? We have to change how we think.

We start by changing the message we're listening to.

Create statements about God's truth and make them personal to you. Place these messages where you'll easily see them.

LANDING

I want you to remember one huge, absolute truth: God's love for you is limitless.

INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this week happens during the Application. Give each student a blank sticker with a pen or sharpie (you may want to have your Small Group Leaders help you with this). Give your students 30 seconds to write down one thing

that God says about them. Then encourage them to put the sticker in their pocket for now and then stick it somewhere they'll see it throughout the week (in their car, on their bathroom mirror, on the doorframe of their room, etc.).



TEACHING SCRIPT

Haters / Week 3

PRELUDE

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BOTTOM LINE

EVEN WHEN YOU FAIL, HE'S FOR YOU.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

In this series, we've been talking about a few of the finer points of hating. First, haters are not a unique species. They are not unicorns—although a hater unicorn would be amazing and would probably plot world domination.

But we've said that haters are everywhere. They're on TV, in your classrooms, and even in your home.

Here's the reality: **We all have the potential to be haters.** Every single one of us, at some time or another, has judged someone else. And like we talked about last time, we can judge people without even knowing who they truly are. We make character assumptions based on how people look, what they do on the weekend, or how they act in class. But in reality, those situations represent a very small portion of their lives and who they are as a person.

But there's another person we all have a tendency to hate on that we haven't spent as much time talking about. This person means well, they try to do what's right, and they constantly seem to fail. This person truly cares about people, but they can't seem to stop doing things like picking on their siblings or being undependable to a friend. They also have some darker, deeper stuff that not a lot of people know about.

You know this person pretty well. Because this person is *you*.

TENSION

3 MINUTES

And this brings up a really interesting point about haters, which, again, includes all of us: **Not only do we tend to hate on ourselves, we tend to hate on ourselves more than anyone else.**

I think there are two main reasons for this:

1. **We spend more time with ourselves than anyone else.** I mean, you can't really escape who you are, what you think, and what you do. You are your own 24/7 reality show. And for better or worse, there's no way to turn off the show. That means you have *plenty* of time to get really good at nitpicking yourself.
2. **While we see issues in other people with generalities, we see our own issues with the precision of a molecular microscope.** When it comes to you and what you say or do, you're able to see both your actions and your motivations. And our motivations tell us a lot about who we truly are. Also, you hear your own thoughts. Spend any amount of time in *anyone's* head and you'll discover how messed up they really are. You are not the exception to this!

This habit of hating on ourselves can often lead us to this conclusion: **If we're personally disappointed in us, then God must be really disappointed in us.** Makes sense, right? Because God is perfect. He never makes mistakes. And He sees every single part of who we are, what we do, and how we think.

So clearly, when a perfect God sees how imperfect we are, He's not happy about it. In fact, He's probably pretty disgusted with us. And if we're being really, *really* honest here, this view of God can cause us to believe this:

God may be our biggest hater.

I know that sounds harsh. But for many of us, we really do believe that! And this belief may not seem like that big of a deal, but it actually has a huge effect on our faith. We can live each day thinking that God is constantly disappointed in us and all of our shortcomings. **And sure, we know that God technically loves us, but that doesn't mean He likes us!**

Because how could a perfect God love such an imperfect mess like me?

Okay. Now that I've completely killed the vibe here, I actually have some awesome news, and it's this: God is actually not like this at all!

Because the truth is that the same God who pushed back on self-righteous critics and stopped them from punishing someone who was technically guilty—the same God who offered grace for someone who was publically humiliated—is the same God who loves you and I today!

Let me show you what I mean.

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul was a rock star of the early church. He was a legendary leader, teacher, and missionary. He was so influential that most of the New Testament is made up of his writings.

TEACHING SCRIPT



But even though Paul is known today as a super-Christian, he didn't start out that way. **In fact, it would be safe to say that Paul started out as a Christian-hater!**

Before he met Jesus, Paul was actually trying to *destroy* the young Church. He was notorious for hunting down, imprisoning, and even killing Christians.

But Paul eventually had a personal encounter with Jesus that completely changed his heart and life. So much so that he did a 180-degree shift and dedicated his life to *building* the church that he once tried to destroy!

It was such a dramatic change that people couldn't even believe it was the same person. **But once Paul encountered Jesus and realized the true nature of God, it wasn't possible for him to stay the same.**

One of the ways Paul built up the church was by writing letters to church leaders. These letters were filled with instruction, encouragement, and huge insights for new Christ-followers.

Here's one of those insights, taken from his letter to the church in Rome.

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant (Romans 5:20 NLT).

Paul is making a huge statement here. There are two parts:

- 1. First, the laws of God weren't put in place to make people feel worthless.** They weren't given to provide ammunition for haters. No, the law is there to show us how far we are from perfect. Which, at first, sounds kind of depressing. But actually, it's just a lesson in self-awareness. We all know we aren't perfect, but the law just made it a little clearer for those living in denial.
- 2. When we sin, God's grace is always more than enough.** And if we find that hard to believe, or we need proof, we only have to look at Paul himself. Here was a person whose sole purpose at one point was to bring down the church and all who followed Jesus. And yet that same Jesus responded to Paul's hate by pursuing him with a relentless grace. That grace exceeded any wrong Paul had done.

Isn't that amazing? God didn't want to strike Paul down, make an example out of him, or pay him back for his sins. No, He wanted Paul to know that no amount of wrong or falling short would keep Him from loving Paul. God responded with grace. And because of that grace, Paul went on to literally change the course of the church and the world.

That makes God gracious. Not a hater.

Paul goes further with this verse:

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? (Romans 2:4 NLT).

TEACHING SCRIPT



Paul experienced it firsthand. He had every reason to expect something different. He was an active enemy of God’s people. But what he experienced from God was exactly what he wrote about to the church in Rome. That God was better than we imagined . . .

- **When you make a mistake, He’s not harsh, He’s kind.**
- When you do something that’s not good, He’s not critical. He’s tolerant.
- When you mess up *yet again*, He’s not angry. He’s patient.

That’s the kind of God we’re talking about. Yes He’s perfect, but that also means He loves perfectly.

To sum up what Paul is saying:

Even when you fail, He’s for you.

Which is such a huge relief! Your mistakes cannot exceed God’s grace. There is always enough! When you fall short, He isn’t just waiting to get on your case and give you what you deserve. No, He’s cheering for you!

He is for you. Period.

And here’s what this perfect God knows—that when we truly understand the depth of His kindness, grace, patience, and love, our natural response will be to live out of His love for us. **So instead of hating on others and ourselves, we’ll respond with the perfect antidote to judgment: grace.** Why? Because we received that same grace from Him when we didn’t deserve it.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES + INTERACTIVE

It’s one thing to hear that God loves you and is full of grace for you. But it’s another thing to believe it, own it, and live in that reality. It’s easier said than done!

But listen, once you get how infinitely good God truly is, it’s a game changer. **It will change how you see Him, yourself, and other people.**

So how can we move from knowing this truth about God to actually *living* in light of it? Well, the answer is both simple and difficult. **We have to change how we think.**

And how do we change how we think?

We start by changing the message we’re listening to. We take all of our misconceptions about God and replace them with His truth.

- So if in your head you hear, “God is tired of my mess-ups,” replace that with, “God delights in forgiving me.”

- If you hear, "God could never love me right now," replace that with, "God has never stopped loving me."
- If you hear, "I've done way too much," replace that with, "I can't out-fail His kindness."
- If you hear, "He is disappointed in me," replace that with, "He is for me."

But don't stop there. **Create statements about God's truth and make them personal to you.** You will never stop being a hater of yourself if your default messages never change.



INTERACTIVE

The Interactive for this message happens right here in the script. Check out the Communicator Guide that precedes this script to find out what to do here.

You have to listen to the right message!

Then, see those messages on a regular basis. This can't be a one-time thing where we read the truth and move on. We need to *continually* keep these messages on our radar.

In a letter to another church, Paul says it this way:

*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and **we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ** (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV, emphasis added).*

We don't know this for sure, but I bet every now and again Paul would wrestle with the mistakes he made in his past and struggle with what God thought of him—if he was worthy to do the work he felt called to do. So it's possible Paul wrote with himself in mind, knowing how easy it was for him and for those around him to slide into hater mode.

So, "*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*" he writes, reminding himself and us that there is nothing more true than God's epic love for us. We know that because of what Christ did for us. And nothing we think can UN-do His love.

Have you ever sent your dog to obedience training or tried to train him yourself? It's a lot of work. You don't just tell him to "sit" once and he gets it. No, you tell him over and over. You remind him. You use signals and sounds and treats to keep him on track. And Paul is saying our thoughts work the same way. We need to train them to be obedient to Christ's message.

So take these new messages and place them where you'll easily see them:

- Make a note and put it on your phone's lock screen.
- Make one of these truths your laptop's desktop image.
- Set up daily reminders with these messages on your phone's calendar throughout the day.
- Set an alarm that triggers your mind to remember the truth you need to remember.



TEACHING SCRIPT

- Write the messages on a sticky note.
- Write them with a dry erase marker on your bathroom mirror.
- Put notes on your room's doorframe so you see them when you leave each day.
- If you drive, put the note somewhere on your dashboard.

Do whatever you have to do to see the truth often!

But no matter which route you take, find a way to get these messages front and center so that you can change how you see God and His view of you.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

I want you to remember one huge, absolute truth: God's love for you is limitless. You can't measure it. You can't erase it. You can't earn your way into it, and you can't fail your way out of it.

Because **even when you fail, He is for you.**

That's how grace works. And when we receive this grace, we'll stop acting like haters toward others and ourselves. In fact, even when others fail, we'll be *for* them, for their reputation, for their wise choices, and for them getting back on their feet.

Instead of a hater, we'll become the kind of person who cheers others on and loves them no matter. Because that's exactly what God has done for us!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
