



Worst and Best

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Read: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 1 Timothy 1:15

Have you ever done something wrong and wished you could go back and change it? Maybe you hurt someone's feelings, disobeyed your parents, lied about something, or got angry at a friend. Sometimes those memories can make you cringe inside when you remember them, right?

The apostle Paul knew that feeling too. Before he became a Christian, he did terrible things. He hurt Christians. He even went from house to house to capture believers. He threw some into prison. He tried to stop people from believing in Jesus. Paul felt awful about the sins he had committed. That's why in today's Bible verse he says, "I am the worst of sinners."

Here's what is surprising: Paul wasn't the only sinner. All people sin—even you and me. We are all the "worst of sinners." Any sin, no matter how big or small it feels, separates us from God. Any sin, no matter how many or how few people it affects, condemns us to hell. Any sin is the worst of sins, and that makes all of us the worst of sinners.

That's the bad news—but here comes the good news! Paul says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). That means Jesus came for people who mess up. Jesus came for people who sin. Jesus came for Paul. Jesus came for you too! On the cross, Jesus became the "worst of sinners" for every mean word. Every selfish choice. Every lie. Every bad attitude. Everything that makes you cringe. He became the worst in order to give you his best—the righteousness of God.

Paul calls this "a trustworthy saying." That means it is completely true and something we can always believe. So, when you remember the worst thing you've ever done and it makes you feel the worst, don't forget this: Jesus forgives you. The cross reminds you that God doesn't remember your worst, but the best of Jesus. Through Jesus, we are forgiven, dearly loved children of God—and there's nothing better than that!

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Questions to Consider:

- What does the apostle Paul call himself in today's Bible verse?
- Who else is the worst of sinners? (Hint: me)
- Why do even "small" sins matter to God?
- Why is it hard to admit when we've done wrong?
- The apostle Paul also uses the phrase "This is a trustworthy saying" in Titus 3:3-8. How are those verses related to the trustworthy saying in today's Bible passage?
- How would you answer someone who says, "You haven't murdered anybody or stolen anything, so you aren't really the worst of sinners"?