

# Just As I Am

**“In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence” (Ephesians 3:12).**

Charlotte Elliott was born in Clapham, England, in 1789. In her younger years, Charlotte was a writer and artist, but by age 30 her health began to fail. For the next 50 years, she would live in pain and illness. Because of her constant sickness, she frequently became frustrated and despondent. She would often say, “If God loved me, why would he do this to me?”

One day, a Swiss minister came to the Elliott house for dinner. During the meal, Charlotte, as she was prone to do, burst into a temper tantrum and stormed out of the room, much to the embarrassment of her family.

The minister followed her into the next room and quietly told her that she felt such anger because she had nothing to cling to. Her only hope, he told her, was to turn to the Lord.

But she didn’t know how she could do that. “How could I, such an angry and bitter person, turn to God?” she asked.

“You can go to God,” the minister told her, “just as you are.”

Charlotte Elliott never forgot that pastor’s advice and years later she penned what would become one of the most famous hymns of all time. She wrote: “Just as I am, without one plea But that thy blood was shed for me And that thou bidd’st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come” (CW 397:1).

For those of us who struggle with self-esteem, who look at ourselves in the mirror and don’t like what we see, who feel like nobody who really knows us could love us, there were no more comforting words ever spoken.

God accepts me. God loves me. God receives me just as I am.

It is important, however, that we understand what that means. God accepts you just as you are, but that doesn’t mean you are acceptable just as you are.

Acceptance doesn’t mean God sees the good in everybody. It doesn’t mean you are good enough just the way you are. You are a sinner. You are a liar. You are stubborn. You hold grudges. You worry. You doubt. You have dark and dirty sins no one else knows about. You are not good enough just as you are. You are not acceptable by God’s standards.

Yet he still accepts you because he made you acceptable in his eyes. God rejected his Son, Jesus—punished him for your dirty sins—so that he could accept you. You have been washed clean in the blood of Jesus and the waters of Holy Baptism.

God accepts you because of Jesus. He accepts you because of his love. His love and acceptance make you special. You are a dearly loved child of God. You are perfect in God’s eyes—not because you are perfect, but because you are washed in Jesus’ blood.

**It doesn’t matter who you are or what you have done, you can go to God ... just as you are.**

From the devotional *364 Days of Devotion* by Andrew Schroer © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission. Book available at [www.nph.net](http://www.nph.net) (Item no. 0600767).

