

Every Spiritual Blessing

Lesson 3

Ephesians 2:1-10

The Gift of God

Memory verse: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Ephesians 2:8-10

Have you ever received something and not appreciated that it was a gift? Have you ever given a gift that was unappreciated, belittled or forgotten? When a gift given is not appreciated, it's such a hurtful waste of something precious. It makes the heart sad and the appreciation of the gift gets lost in the obscurity of unappreciation. This lack of appreciation can happen in our Christian walk as well concerning the gift of God, this gift of the grace of our salvation. It can happen whether we are busy doing good for the Lord or we are slacking in our service, because we can forget that our salvation, our ability to serve the Lord, the lives and the blessings we have in Christ—are all a gift. The gift of God is one that we don't deserve nor can we earn—ever. The truth is no one is entitled to God's love and favor, let alone His salvation in Christ, it is a gift of God given graciously to all who would receive it by faith. Most of us know this but at times we forget this, don't we? Perhaps we get over confident and take the gift for granted or take the credit for it. There may be times when we neglect the gift of God with anxious thoughts, thinking it is something to be earned and maintained to be valid and when we fall short we think that God doesn't really love us, want us or is too displeased with us. If one tends to gravitate to these scenarios described, it reveals a lack of appreciation and understanding of the tremendous gift of God. The gift of God is all-encompassing, going beyond our salvation. The gift of God for your life includes every good thing that God has prepared and planned for you before you ever even knew Jesus and received His gift by faith. The Lord wants you to rest in the knowledge that He has chosen you, saved you, and blessed you; not because you deserved it but because of HIS gracious love for you, even when you were "dead in your trespasses" and were "living to gratify the cravings of the flesh." The good works that God has for all of us to "walk in" do not justify us or earn us a right standing before God. However, they do give us a greater realization of the purpose and intentionality of God's love for us and our inclusion in His family as we serve Him, walking in the good things He has for us to do that bring Him glory. Take heart, oh precious one, you are the Lord's beautiful masterpiece, handcrafted by Him. Receive the gift of God fully and appreciate it as the precious gift that it is! When you understand this, you can freely demonstrate that you value this gift by your words and deeds, which will testify to others the amazing grace of God and the genuineness of your salvation.

O' Praise Him! Live a life that brings Him praise!

Day 1

1. Read this weeks text, Ephesians 2:1-10. What are your first thoughts as you read the text? Are there things that grabbed your attention or questions you have? Share your thoughts.
2. In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul describes our condition before we accepted Christ and began to follow His ways. Maybe we could even add a few more descriptive phrases depending on our own personal testimonies. Based on Paul's description in these verses, list at least 4 things that Paul described as a life before salvation:

a. Who was behind our unsaved condition (v.2)

3. The Devil has been working to negatively influence people against God from the very beginning. The enemy of your soul will not stop trying to turn your heart away from God just because you are Christian. But Satan is no match for God and we are to be confident in the Lord who tells us to know the schemes of the enemy (Eph 6:11-12). What do the following verses show you about the devil's tactics to influence people?

1 John 5:19

John 10:10

John 8:44

Acts 5:3-4 (What caused Ananias to fall?)

Genesis 4:7 (How does God warn Cain?)

4. Here is the good news—You are not powerless! You do not have to fall into deception! Read James 4:6-10. What is our part in keeping the devil from influencing us?
5. In Ephesians 2:3 Paul exposes the second cause for our separation from God; our sinful flesh! Read Galatians 5:16-21. What are the “works” of the flesh if the Holy Spirit does not control us?

6. Since becoming a born again child of God, what were some of the past “works of the flesh” that you struggled with? How has your new life and new nature in the Holy Spirit changed you?

When you consider what you have been saved FROM, you must remember that you were saved FOR—something better!

Day 2 Ephesians 2:4-7

God is merciful and when we put our trust in Jesus to save us God does not give us the penalty our sin deserves, which is death and eternal separation from God. When we read “child of wrath” the term simply states the condition of everyone before they put faith in Jesus Christ. We are all born into sin because of the Fall of Adam. Our sin separates us from God and we are at odds with God because of our sinful disposition that naturally seeks its own will and is against a holy, perfect, loving God. It’s hard to imagine that an innocent looking baby could be at odds with God and possessing a sin nature—but it’s true (you know it the first time they exert their will to say, “No!”). There is a sin nature in every person and without God’s help none would seek Him and all would reject His mercy. Left to our own devices the Bible says, we all have turned away, none are righteous, none seek God, there are none “good—no not one” (Rom 3:10-12). If left in that condition a person will experience separation from God for eternity. God does not want that. Because of His grace and love for us proven at the cross, He actually offers to us what we do not deserve—grace, mercy and forgiveness—but we must acknowledge our sin and need of forgiveness and choose to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior—He is the way, the truth and the life and no comes to God without Him (Jn 14:6). Jesus came to give us eternal life and abundant life (John 10:10-11) Those who choose to come under the Lordship of Christ, being filled with the Holy Spirit, should be in a constant state of rejoicing over that very truth.

1. Do you remember the day you were made alive in Christ, the day you accepted Him as your Lord and Savior? Describe briefly how you felt that day:

2. How are God’s actions described towards us in Ephesians 2:4-5? *Note God’s heart and action towards us even when we were “dead in trespasses.”

- a. We each know what we were like before we accepted Christ and began walking with Him, and if we honestly assess our lives we know we have had shortcomings in our new life in Christ as well. How does this revelation that He loved you before you “cleaned up your act” help you to realize the depth of the love of God?

- b. Think about the unsaved people who still resist God’s plan of salvation. He loves them too, even while they are dead in their trespasses. How does this encourage you as you consider the people you have been praying for to come to Christ?

3. Read Ephesians 2:5-7 there are 4 distinct things Paul notes here that should impact our daily living. Complete the following:

(v.5) He made us _____ together with _____(by grace).

(v.6) He _____ us up together. And He made us _____ together in the _____ places in Christ Jesus. (v.7)That in the ages to come He might show the _____ of HIS _____ in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Made alive, Raised up, Seated with Christ in heavenly places and Recipients of the exceeding riches of His grace because we are in Christ! These 4 distinct things changed the spiritual realm of our lives and ought to be impacting how we live out our lives in the physical realm every day.

- 4. Considering how you were before the Lord saved you and how you are now, how has God shown you personally the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness in your life?

- 5. Close this day reflecting what you have learned and write a thank you note to God for His grace and kindness.

Day 3 Ephesians 2:8-9

1. Write out Ephesians 2:8-9 as a personal statement and replace “you” with “me or I” etc...

How does writing this in a personal way encourage you?

Salvation is the gift of God! We cannot boast about anything except how graciously loving our God is for saving us by giving His One and Only Begotten Son—Jesus (John 3:16).

2. Read Titus 2:11-15. The realization of the grace of God should affect our lives. What does God’s grace teach us that we should do?
 - a. How does looking for the “blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” help you to live for Christ now?
 - b. How does our current culture’s message differ from what Paul is saying in this letter to Titus?

Let’s be honest, God’s grace can be defined wrongly, misunderstood, or even taken for granted. When followers of Christ truly understand the grace of God, it radically effects their lives to live for the Lord with great gratitude, passion, and joyful obedience. A true understanding and appreciation of the grace of God does not lead believers to look for ways to justify or explain away compromise. Instead there is an intentional pursuit of godly living that demonstrates love and loyalty to God. Personal compromise can occur when we justify the worldly behaviors of others and adopt them as an acceptable model for living even though God’s Word teaches otherwise. What does this look like in a life? We see it in “Christians” who think that it is okay to walk according to what they want (the flesh), instead of what God says (the Spirit). They do not allow God’s Word to be the final authority but they rather pick-and-choose from God’s Word what fits their personal agenda or the cultural norm. It isn’t a good witness to the world. Let us be true followers of Jesus, avoiding compromise, keeping our eyes fixed on God, being grateful, full of love, dedicated and choosing to obey to His Word! He is worthy of us living for His glory!

3. Living in the fullness and understanding of God's grace has been a struggle for many believers. Paul spent much time addressing the topic of grace. Read Romans 3:21-28. How many times is the word "faith" used?
 - a. When we struggle to "feel" God's grace in our lives, what may be lacking in us?
 - b. Could it be we are not built up in FAITH? The cure is found in Hebrews 4:16. Write out the verse:

Our prayer life is a great illustration of entering the throne room of grace, boldly entering the presence of God and drawing near with true hearts in full assurance of faith because we put our trust in Jesus who is faithful and true. Prayer along with meditating on God's Word is a choice and when we do it we become much more aware of the presence of God. *Thinking about things* is not the same as praying to God about those things. Prayer is a conversation with God, where you not only take the time to speak to God, but also listen to Him. When we pray as believers we come under the work of the shed blood of Jesus that washes away our sin and His righteousness covers us giving us full access to God. As such, we enter into the *throne room of grace* (Heb 4:16) by faith in prayer and find grace and mercy to help us in our time of need! It is in this place we stand in confidence and rejoice in the hope we have in Jesus knowing He hears from heaven and we begin to hear Him here on earth as He speaks to our heart, reminding us of His Word and as a result our spirit is built up in faith.

4. Read Romans 5:1-5. What is the result of accessing the grace of God by faith?
5. Prayer by faith, it sounds so obvious, right? When we struggle with our faith, always feeling condemnation and God's grace seems far away, it is likely because we are weak from a lack of quiet prayer time with the Lord. Being still before Him and waiting on Him in prayer is so valuable and necessary. In your spiritual life, prayer can be likened to your body's physical need of air, water, and food. When you feel weak or pressed down—run to God in prayer! Enter into the "throne room of grace" with a sincere heart, and trust Jesus your faithful High Priest who is always making intercession for you. To be healthy, strong and full of faith, reading the Word alone is not enough, acts of service is not enough, we need a purposeful, consistent prayer life with the Lord and not starve ourselves from lack of intimate contact with Him in prayer. The Lord God is truly the air you breath, the water that refreshes and the food that strengthens your body, soul and spirit. How do you think neglecting prayer on daily basis affects your life?

6. Hebrews 10:19-23 instructs us to draw near into the presence of God. Read below and highlight the things you are to have or do in one color, and then in another color what Jesus has done and compare them. How does what Jesus has done for you help you to do what this verse tells you to do?

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Prayer is the most spiritually practical way to be in the presence of God. Maybe prayer is hard for some because they feel they don't know how to pray. To free ourselves up we must remember God looks at the heart's intent and will not turn away a heart that is truly seeking Him. Sometimes we can treat our prayer life like a "to-do list" in the midst of our daily busy life. Imagine if you have a friend in your home just watching you busily go about your day, but you never stop to talk to them, never acknowledging that they are there. All the while your friend has grace to give in exchange for your guilt, freedom from the thing that has you bound. He has wisdom to impart to you for the tasks you are facing and decisions you are fretting over; extra strength for the trial you are facing, and He is there to help carry the burden of the heavy load you bear. This friend sees your fear and is standing there with peace to give you in exchange for your worries over the "unexpected" challenges in your life. This friend knows your heart is feeling empty or wounded and has the remedy of His love to fill your heart, to heal the wounds and satisfy you. Jesus is that friend! When we pray inviting Him into our day we receive His grace, peace, power, wisdom, strength, joy, love, correction, direction, forgiveness and encouragement.

Prayer is another way we can appropriate the grace of God in our lives— knowing Jesus paid the price so you can enter into the throne room of grace to find the help you need. Life is too full and too busy with cares for us not to have that precious prayer time! Don't settle for frantic prayer flares that we shoot up to God: "Lord, help!" "Lord, rescue me!" "Lord, I'm sorry." Instead, regularly go in and meet with the Lord and bask in the glow of His peace and the majesty of spending time with Jesus and the Father in the throne room of grace. You will be so blessed!

In the presence of the Lord there is fullness of joy. — Psalm 16:11

5. Close today in prayer. If your prayer life has been lacking confess it to Him and ask Him to renew you. He will. The Lord is graciously and joyfully waiting for you. Come to Him in prayer and know that your Father in heaven loves you, delights in listening to you, and will speak to you.

Day 4 Ephesians 2:10

1. "Grace changes everything" is a popular and accurate statement! Grace changes the lives of those who belong to Christ! Write Ephesians 2:10 in the first person by replacing the "we" with "I" to make this a statement about yourself.

The word "workmanship" is the greek word *poiema* . It is where the word poem comes from. Poiema means "something made" by God Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:17 declares we are *new creations in Christ*. Many commentaries add that this word translates to "masterpiece" or "work of art". God has made each of us His own unique masterpieces. It's our choice to live it out or not. We are not meant to sit on shelves or be stagnant in museums. We are living masterpieces and God wants to use our lives for His glory. Do you believe this?

2. What are some reasons people might struggle to believe that they are God's Workmanship and that God has good works for them to do?

C.S. Lewis wrote, *"We are a divine work of art. If Rembrandt's artistic masterpieces have great undisputed value, would not God's one-of-a-kind human masterpieces convey even greater value?"*

To this we answer "yes" because we know God places great value on our lives. One has only to look to the Cross of Calvary to see the proof.

3. How do these verses encourage you to live out the "masterpiece" life that God has for you?

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 3:12-14

4. Jesus talked about the works we would do as believers. What does John 14:12-14 say about that?
 - a. What is required to do the work Jesus is talking about?(v.12)
 - b. What are the works Jesus had been doing?(*hint, what was Jesus doing in His ministry as He shared the Gospel?)
 - c. What do you think Jesus meant by “they will do greater things than these”?(v.12)
 - d. What assurance does Jesus give that we will be able to do great things for Him (v.13-14) ?
 - e. Who gets the glory for the things we do for the Lord and why?(v.13)
5. Jesus tells us through belief in Him, we will do greater works to bring Him glory. There are two other important details He reveals in John 14:15-17. What does verse 15 tell you to do?
 - a. How has the Father ensured you can do these great works? (v.16-17)
 - b. “Helper” is how Jesus identifies the Holy Spirit. This word means “another, just like (Jesus).” Where does the “Helper” dwell (v.17)? How does this encourage you?
6. Making a personal connection with these truths will change your walk with God! Review your responses in questions 3, 4 and 5. Prayerfully consider what these verses mean to you personally. What are your thoughts about the idea that you are God’s masterpiece, with His Holy Spirit dwelling in you, and that you are made for good works that He has prepared for you to accomplish?

Day 5 Review and Reflect

1. Review your lesson and Re-read Ephesians 2:1-10. What has the Holy Spirit ministered to you as you have spent time doing the bible study lesson this week?

2. Day 2: Ephesians 2:4-7 says Jesus in His rich mercy and great love took us out of the deadness of our trespasses (sin) and made us alive with Him, raised us up and made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us. Share with your group some of the ways God has personally shown you exceeding riches of His grace and kindness in your life.

3. Day 3: Read Romans 5:1-5. What is the result of accessing the grace of God by faith? How does this speak to you personally even when faced with trials and tribulation (troubles)?

4. In this week's lesson we looked at the importance of prayer. How does your *prayer* life affect your *faith* life?
 - a. Praying God's Word and declaring God's promises in your prayers will stir up faith in your hearts! Share one of your favorite scriptures that speak over your life or cling to when you are feeling weak in your faith?

5. Day 4 of our lesson we were reminded we are God's workmanship. Is there a "good work" that God has been laying on your heart or bringing to your mind that you are unsure of or afraid to step out in faith and start doing? After completing this lesson has God prompted your heart to do something about it?

"Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him and He will help you!"~ Psalm 37:5 NLT
Close your time in prayer bringing the things God is speaking to you before His throne!