



WORD FOR LIFE CHURCH MINISTRIES

IN CHRIST: BELIEVING AND LIVING BECAUSE OF JESUS
a study of Ephesians

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Ephesians 2:1-10

Chapter 2 advances the idea of life in Christ for believers, but attention is more narrowly given to the new life that believers have by faith in Jesus Christ. The concept of regeneration is explained and its implication for believers is provided. Again, the overarching theme of our study comes into view:

In Christ: Believing and Living Because of Jesus

In this portion of Ephesians, the believers' regenerated life is tied to the resurrected Christ. Believers can experience new life because Jesus was raised to new life. Importantly, Paul also has an eye toward the believers' resurrection to be realized as a future reality.

Chapter/Section Theme: New Life in Christ.

God's grace brings new life to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ for salvation. (NOTE: This continues the foundation Paul laid in chapter one.)

Reflection Question: In what ways have you been transformed by God's grace?

Key Terms

- *trespass* (v. 1, 5): falling away, lapse or deviation, false step. Comes from the Greek word *parapipto* and literally means "a side-slip." Trespasses can be understood to be unconscious or non-deliberative actions. [With this, do you understand Matthew 6:14-15 in a different light?]
- *sin* (v. 1): a failure, to miss the mark, guilt; emphasizes self-originated nature, not empowered by or originating with God. As such, to sin is to forfeit something because of missing the mark. Can be an act (commission) or failure to act (omission). Actions or failures that have power over people – e.g., "dead in trespasses and sins."
- *the ruler of the power of the air* (v. 2): Lit., the first power □ the one in charge. In this context, the "first power" is understood to be the devil (see 4:27 and 6:11) and is the one to whom unbelievers are subject. One of the ways to define the word/person "devil" is someone who makes charges that bring down/destroy. By nature, the devil condemns by false accusation to cause estrangement between God and humanity.
- *desires of flesh* (v. 3): eagerness for, inordinate want, or lust for things pertaining to the body or human nature. This is more than a passing thought; it is a longing.
- *children of wrath* (v. 3): the descendants or offspring of violent passion. This word "wrath" gives us the English word "orgy". Paul conceives of this "desire" as being part of human nature, which makes human beings descendants of wrath.



- *Mercy* (v. 4): pity, compassion, to exercise clemency. In a sense, the way we understand God to be merciful is to appreciate that God’s mercy is defined by God’s loyalty to God’s covenant with humanity. In this sense, one is kind or gracious to another because of the relationship that is captured in a sense of covenant.

Chapter Outline

Bible study note: Dividing this section of chapter two does not appear to be Paul’s intention. Instead, Ephesians 2:1-10 should be read and understood as a singular paragraph—one central point is being made and each verse supports the one point without diverting to some other means by which the point can be made. The following outline is an attempt to better understand how the central point is constructed.

I. **Ephesians 2:1-3 – The state of humanity**

In this section of the text, Paul describes the spiritual condition of all believers before being regenerated through faith in Jesus and acknowledging Him as the Christ.

Before being filled with the fullness of Christ (see 1:23), this is the state of all people, believers included:

A. Spiritually Dead (1): _____

B. Bound by sin (2): _____

C. Corrupted and corruptible (3): _____

A state of hopelessness once gripped even believers, seeking to blind them to God’s offer of grace. Simply put, one’s natural state is subject to having been corrupted and being further corrupted.

This was the condition of human nature before God’s grace created a new reality for believers. Knowing this, be _____ with unbelievers, be _____ about the state of their souls, and share the _____ to ensure they can access God’s grace.



II. Ephesians 2:4-7 – The grace of God

The transitional nature of this long sentence is also the central theme of this chapter. Indeed, the entire letter hinges on this section of chapter 2. How fitting that Paul uses an elongated sentence to spell out the Gospel—the manner in which God brings believers into new life in Christ.

- A. *The nature of God (4)*. God’s nature is not like human nature.
1. God is _____.
 2. God is _____.
- B. *The power of God (5a)*. God’s power is not subject to an individual’s spiritual condition.
1. God makes alive what was _____.
 2. God makes right or just, what was _____ or out of place (*see def. of trespass*).
- C. *The plan of God (5b-6a)*. God’s plan is fulfilled as an act of grace.
1. God’s plan is to save _____ as an act of grace.
 2. God’s plan is to join believers, _____, together with Christ.
- D. *The sovereignty of God (6b)*. God’s will is fulfilled as an act of authority.
1. God’s will is that Jesus receive the honor due as the Sovereign one.
- E. *The favor of God (7)*. God’s favor is fulfilled through showers of grace.
1. God’s grace is _____. Believers can anticipate the reign of Christ.
 2. God’s grace is _____. It cannot be measured and is limitless.
 3. God’s grace is _____. It is how believers come to be in Christ.

Did you see all the grace in this one sentence? By grace, God enables believers to understand more of who God is and how God engages with people to fulfill God’s plan. This is God’s work, which shines through the world to enliven all believers.

III. Ephesians 2:8-10 – The duty of believers

To underscore the point just made, Paul reiterates the core of the message: “You were saved by _____.” With that, in verses 8-10, we come to the “so what?” of it all. Now, Paul affirms the role of grace in salvation and the implications of God’s grace for those who have received it.



A. To know that you have been saved (8-9)

1. Remember how you were _____.
2. Recognize God as the _____ of your transformation.
3. Resist _____ because of transformation.

B. To act because of salvation (10)

1. Act according to your _____ nature.
2. Act according to the _____ of renewed nature.
3. Act according to the _____ of renewed nature.
