



LEADERS GUIDE 3:

EPHESIANS 2:1-10

Life from Death

DAY 1

Read the paragraph 3 times.

Ephesians 2:1 – “As for you” refers to Gentile Christians in Asia Minor

Verses 1-3 depict the condition of unbelievers before God transformed them in Christ.

1. In verse 1, how does Paul describe their condition in which they used to live?

“Dead I transgressions and sins”

Both words denote disobedience to God and a refusal to obey God's laws. (from Ephesians by Charles R. Erdmann). They include active commission of sins and passive sins of omission, acts of missing the mark. Both mean to be spiritually dead which is to be separated from God and have no communication with Him. (from The Bible Knowledge Commentary by Walvoord and Zuck). One can be physically and mentally vibrantly alive and at the same time spiritually dead. To be spiritually alive one must be conscious of divine realities, of faith and love of God. “Before God we are all rebels and failures.” (John R. Stott)

2. In verse 2, what 2 ways were they following?

“The ways of the world” and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air”

The ways of the world is a reference to an ungodly world that is not aligned with God's teachings – a system of values and perspectives, following other unbelievers and influenced by their peer pressure. It often teaches that good works alone are eternally redeeming, it is popularly appealing.

The ruler of the kingdom of the air – see 1 John 5:19 – the whole world is under the control of the evil one. The unsaved follow in his opposition to God. “Follow” means “walk” – same sense of deliberate choice of direction.

DAY 2

1. Using the footnotes in the NIV Study Bible for verse 2 – who is the ruler of the kingdom of the air? NIV Footnote: “ruler” = Satan (cf John 14:30, “prince”).

Satan is the commander of the evil powers in the unseen world – temporarily. He exercises as much influence on our souls as air does on our body.

2. How else is he described in verse 2?

“the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”

“sons of disobedience” are those in conscious and active rebellion and opposition against God. Disobedience is the characteristic feature of their rebellion to God. (Erdmann)

3. Do you see a connection between “in those who are disobedient” and the description of their condition in verses 1 and 2 – write out the connection.

Those who are disobedient are dead in their transgressions and sins.

The main attribute of those who are dead (in eternal separation from God) in their sins, is rebelling against God’s teaching. They follow their own way and the ways of the world, that has a value system contrary to what God has provided them for their good.

TO DIG DEEPER: Look up the cross reference in verse 2 for “the ruler of the kingdom of the air”.

(Cross references are noted by verse in the center column or side column of the page, denoted by a small letter at the end of a word or phrase in the verse – in this case the letter j. The cross reference is Johns 12:31) What else is this “ruler” called?

The “prince of this world”

Satan’s sphere of activity is on earth – see Job 1:6-7

Now look up John 14:30 and John 16:11 – what do you learn about this “ruler”?

He has “no hold” on Jesus. The worldly ruler “stands condemned”.

John 12:31 also adds to this that the cross was not a victory for Satan ,but actually was a judgement on him and the act for his defeat. Christ was sinless so Satan has no hold on Him – he does on people because of their fallen state. See Genesis 3:1-7.

See 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 1 John 5:19 for other phrases used to describe this being.

“the god of this age”; “the evil one”

Note that “the god of this age” blinds the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel – the truth of Christ. This often prevents them from seeing the path of destruction they are traveling and the wonderful glories of God’s way that He has provided for them.

It is important to note that Satan is a created being – he was an angel – he is not a human. See Job 1:6, Isaiah 14:12-17. Also Ezekiel 28 11-19 is considered a description of Satan as the true king of Tyre. He is a powerful spirit being whose goal is to be God. He is nothing to joke about.

DAY 3

1. In verse 3, who else also lived among the disobedient?

“ all of us”

Meaning all Jews and Gentiles when they don’t believe in Christ as Savior.

2. What 2 ways show living in disobedience according to verse 3?

“gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following it’s desires and thoughts”

“sinful nature” translates “sarkos” or the flesh which means the unregenerated nature or the self-centered human nature. “the thoughts” translates “dianoion” – which suggests that the unbeliever’s reasoning processes are subject to false reasoning which directs their wills and actions. See Romans 1:21. Our self-centered human nature participates in destructive activities of both the body and mind.

The end of this verse refers to the “wrath” of God. Unbelievers have a close relationship with God’s wrath. Disobedience and unbelief lead to the wrath of God – which is God’s personal, righteous constant hostility to evil, his settled refusal to compromise with it and his resolve instead to condemn it”. (Stott) It is

not an intemperate outburst of an uncontrolled character, as we often think of wrath or anger. This presents a hopeless picture – BUT the wrath of God is not the entire story!

3. In verse 4 – “But” – what caused the difference in these people’s lives?
“because of God’s great love for us, He is rich in mercy”

The “but” is a word that indicates a change in condition as a result. There is a remedy for our condition of lostness and condemnation. NOTE: God’s actions towards sinners in contrast with their plight.

“mercy” is from the Greek word “eleos” which means undeserved kindness. Thus, God, who is rich in exhibiting undeserved kindness, acts on behalf of sinners because of His great love. “love” is the Greek word “agape” meaning to seek the highest good for the one loved.

DAY 4

1. In verses 5 and 6 what 3 things has God done for us?
“made us alive in Christ”; “raised us up with Christ”; “seated us with Him in the heavenly realms”

God has made it possible for us to share in Christ’s resurrection, ascension and enthronement. The one who Himself is alive has made the spiritually dead alive in Christ – an act of grace. So believers I Christ have been made and are now alive to God! Christians, those in whom Christ dwells, have a new, powerful and unique life and position because of Christ’s resurrection. Christians are positioned spiritually in heaven, we are no longer mere earthlings, our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20) (Walvoord and Zuck). We have entered upon a heavenly experience of fellowship with God and of life in His presence. (C. Erdmann).

2. Note the tense of the verbs: “made” or “quicken”; “raised” or “hath raised” and “seated” or “made us to sit”. These are past tense, indicating an action done in the past with a present effect.
3. In verse 5, what was our condition when God did these three things for us?
“we were dead in our transgressions”

The past actions of God (see #2) covers the saints of the past and us, now, and the generations to come. There is nothing we can do now to influence God to take these actions. He already has.

NOTE: In physical time this was done when Jesus lived on earth, died, was resurrected and ascended into heaven. In spiritual (or eternal) time this covers all who put their faith in God before Christ came and all who would put their faith in Christ after he came.

DAY 5

1. In verse 7 – Why did God do this for us? “In order that . . .” How is it expressed?
“in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of his grace”, it is expressed “in His kindness to us, in Christ Jesus”.

Paul adds “kindness” here as an attribute of God’s character. It means appropriate or suitable. “The appropriate expression of God’s love to those who are spiritually dead is to give them life – this is ‘the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness.’” (Walvoord and Zuck)

2. In verse 8 - What are the means by which we have been saved? (see also verse 5)
Grace and faith
3. The footnote for verse 8 in the NIV Study Bible says: This is a major passage for understanding God's grace, i.e., his kindness, unmerited favor and forgiving love. "you have been saved" – "Saved" has a wide range of meanings. It includes salvation from God's wrath, which we all had incurred by our sinfulness. The tense of the verb (also in verse 5) suggests a completed action with emphasis on its present effect. From reading this what do you understand better about the meaning of "grace" and "saved"
This new life in Christ is due wholly to the unmerited favor of God (C. Erman) Faith is the instrument by which the gift is received. Faith is not a "work". It does not merit salvation; it is the means by which one accepts God's free salvation (Walvoord and Zuck).
4. In verses 8 and 9 – our salvation is not from or by what two things?
"from yourselves" (verse 8) or "by works" (verse 9)

Our salvation is a gift from whom?
From God.

No one can bring salvation to himself by his own efforts. These verses explain the "incomparable riches of His grace".

TO DIG DEEPER: Note in the cross reference for "grace" in verse 8 it refers to romans 3:24. Go to Romans 3:24. The cross reference for "grace" gives a list of all the verses which refer to "grace" in the same manner as in this Ephesians passage. Look up each verse and write down what you learn about grace from these verses. (Johns 1:14, 16, 17; romans 4:16; 5:21; 6:14; 11:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 2:8; 4:7; Titus 2:11 Hebrews 4:16)

DAY 6

1. In verse 10 we are God's "work of art", created to do God's works – this is what He has planned for those who come to Him through Christ. How does this define who you are and your purpose in life?
While no action or work we can do can help obtain our salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church. (from the NLT)
2. FOR REFLECTION: If you have been a Christian (saved by grace) since you were a child it is sometimes difficult to see that you were saved from a very sinful life. The Bible calls all disobedience to God sin. Let each of us, no matter when we accepted Christ, reflect on what your life was before Christ, or what it might have been if you had not known Christ. Praise and thank God for his grace, mercy, love and kindness to you.
Pray for those whom you know need this salvation in their life.