

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Ephesians 2:8-10

LEADER'S STUDY

Grow in Faith

Ephesians 2:8-10

What is happening?

We are saved by God's grace through faith and this does not depend on our good works. Even though we are not saved *by* our good works, we are saved to enable us to *do* the good works God planned for us long ago. We are God's masterpiece, and He created each one of us with unique purpose in His image. Before the fall, He intended for us to rule over the entire creation. He desires relationship with us and will guide and watch over us if we submit to His leadership. Jesus Himself demonstrated this dependence on God the Father during his earthly life and set an example for us to follow.

Where is the Gospel?

We think we know better than God. We like to list all our "good works" to God to prove that we deserve a place in heaven, but even our good works are like filthy rags to God. The minute we take ownership of any good deed, we sin because we have failed to acknowledge that everything good and perfect comes from God: we are seeking our own glory and our own autonomy when in fact any form of self-leadership directly opposes God's purpose for our lives. Perhaps this is why God told Paul that His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). The only way Christ's power can work through us is if we rely on His wisdom, trust His goodness, and obey His commands. What would be the point of our faith if it did not result in life transformation? Sanctification in the life of believers prepares us for an eternity with God. Imagine if an infant refused to trust the adults in his life to help him grow in strength, knowledge, and skills simply because it was scary and painful and uncomfortable and he thought staying the same was best? That infant would be alive, but would never learn to walk or talk or feed himself, let alone grow up to love children of his own and find meaning and purpose in life. In the same way, we cannot begin to fathom what God has planned for us, and if we refuse to live a life of faith by submitting to God, we will miss out on so much.

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: Is it possible to have faith in God and not submit to His leadership? How is God calling me to depend on Him more? What specific purpose has God created me for? How would spending time with God and getting to know Him personally increase my trust in Him?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Genesis 1:26-31; Psalm 32:8-10; John 12:49-50; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9 and 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Hebrews 11:32-12:3; James 2:14-26

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ Ephesians 2:8-10
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation. Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective.

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

What seems to be the main point of this passage?

Is faith in Christ a supernatural gift or based on our own experiences in life?

Read as many different translations of Ephesians 2:10 as you can and compare/contrast.

Are we God's masterpiece individually or collectively?

Why must faith in Christ always result in life transformation?

What did you discover or learn about God and His character from this passage?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

What specific good things has God planned for me to do?

What situations in life is God calling me to rely on Him instead of on myself?

When I take a step in obedience to God, who has all the responsibility and all the credit?

How is God calling you to obey, based on this passage?

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom 10:17)

Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?