

## Studying the Letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians is about learning to let who we are in Christ, shape how we perform in life.

# Ephesians Study 3 (⊕ 50 min.)



## Warm Up (⊕ 10 min.)

### Greeting / Welcome

**Prayer Requests** (try to balance the amount of time between prayer and / or testimony by limiting the amount of prayer requests and/or time for testimony sharing.)

**Testimony Sharing** (*Optional* - prior to the group study time, ask one person to share for 3-5 minutes on how the recent truths being studied have impacted their life. Remember: *authenticity is the key* - What have you (or a group member you've asked to testify) shared lately that gives them insight into your journey? Try to share things pertaining to the recent theme of the study.)




## Overview of Today's Study (⊕ 2 min.)

**Lesson Title:**        *"The Power to Perform"*

**Lesson Theme:**    *God showing immeasurable kindness by giving eternal life to a people who absolutely do not deserve it.*








**By the End of the Study** be able to answer the **"Key Question."**

**Today's Key Question**  What does "being made alive" spiritually have to do with this life here and now?

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- Lesson Outline:**
1.  Connecting the Studies
  2.  Bible Passage Study
    - a.  Set the Context / Read Text
    - b.  3 Study Topics
  3.  Group Discussion
  4.  Review / Preview and  Key Question

### 1. Connecting the Studies (⊕ 3 min.)

**A. During the last two studies** we observed how all 3 Persons of the Trinity had an important role in giving Christians a new identity. **The Father** had the plan to be in a close, restored relationship with us and He purposefully executed that plan. **Jesus** shed His own blood, giving up His life in our stead to redeem us from eternal separation from God. **The Holy Spirit** permanently indwells us as the guarantee of our spiritual rebirth in Christ.

**B. The lesson we learned** from God's relentless **pursuit** of us is that He greatly **values** each one of us.  **Question 1**

**C. How can we apply** this lesson for here and now?

**One:** I need to see myself as God sees me: *highly valuable*.

**Two:** I need to see others as God sees them: *highly valuable*.

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### 2. Bible Passage Study (⌚ 20 min.)



#### Set the Context Turn to & Read Eph. 2:1-10

- 1. *From and To:*** The Apostle Paul to the Saints at Ephesus. From our previous studies, we noted that the believers at Ephesus were dealing with many of the same enticements and distractions we do in our society today. Their culture opposed those first century Christians belief in Christ as does ours today.
- 2. *Side Note:*** We also noted that Paul was a contemporary of the founding church fathers and knew the Apostle Peter personally. Paul's writings were completely accepted by those that actually walked with Jesus. There is no dispute among the Apostles concerning each others writings.
- 3. *For Us in the Here and Now:*** We can apply the truth taught in Ephesians because our generation has much in common with those of ancient Ephesus. We also can accept Paul's writings as inspired by the Holy Spirit just as the first century Christians who lived with Jesus accepted Paul's writings.
- 4. *Continuing the Study:*** In our study today, we will see how our new identity in Christ is a dramatic change at the very core of our being and how our essence or nature has been eternally changed. This spirit centered transformation is intended to manifest itself in the physical world.

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## Study Topic 1

### Our Former Dead Spiritual Make Up – Reread Eph. 2:1-3

**Illustration** (optional) There was a scary movie out 8 or 10 years ago with actor Bruce Willis called *The Sixth Sense*. While the premise of this movie is completely inaccurate from a Biblical perspective, there is a haunting quote from the film that applies to our study here. The plot for the movie has to do with a little boy who has the ability to see the dead spirits of folks who have died and not yet moved on to the after life. When he first tells Bruce Willis of his ability, he says, “I see dead people. But they don’t know they’re dead.” This is frighteningly close to the state that every one of us is born into. We’re born with dead soul/spirits. And until we hear and understand our need for spiritual birth, we remain the walking dead.

#### A. What do these verses tell us?

**All people** are born into this world with spirits that are dead to God but very much alive to the **world**, **devil**, and our **flesh** habits of living life without God.  **Question 2**

#### B. What do these verses mean?

**1. This spiritually dead condition causes** us to behave in agreement with the direction and trends of this world.

**2. Being spiritually dead to God** causes us to behave under, and accept the influence of the devil. As long as we remain spiritually dead, we are by our very nature just like the rest of the unbelieving world: at enmity with God raging against Him.

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### C. How should this principle impact my life?

**1. If I am not reborn then I am still at enmity with God.** It is something that can be reconciled immediately upon my belief and I should settle the matter right away.


**2. If I am reborn, then I have hope.** If the spiritually dead are united with the world and the devil, then spiritual rebirth breaks the bondage that this world and the devil have over me.



### Study Topic 2

#### Undeserved Favor Shown to Believers by God – Eph. 2:4-9

#### A. What do these verses tell us?

**1. God is full of compassion and supports us *because*** of His intense love for us. God's mercy is based on *His choice* to **love** us in **spite** of our ugly sinfulness.  **Question 3**

**2. God has shown** His choice of love for us by providing the way for us to have eternal life and giving life to our dead spirits when we believe in His Way, Jesus. His love is shown by the "quickening" of (making alive of) our dead spirits.

#### B. What do these verses mean?

**1. Our spiritual rebirth is based on the driving force of God's love** and *not* on our ability to impress Him.

**2. Eternal life truly is a *gift*.** Gifts can only be accepted, not earned or worked for.

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### **C. How should this principle impact my life?**

- 1. If I have not accepted** the gift of spiritual rebirth and eternal life, I need to swallow my pride and do so right away.
- 2. If I have** accepted the gift of eternal life, am I now living by grace or am I trying to perform on my own?




### **Study Topic 3**

#### **Internal, Eternal Power – Eph. 2:10**

#### **A. What do these verses tell us?**

- 1. Each Christian is God's project.** We've been reborn as a new creature in Christ for the purpose of performing "good works."
- 2. This was God's plan** prior to the event of our spiritual rebirth and was and is to impact our life here in the physical world.

#### **B. What do these verses mean?**

- 1. My spiritual rebirth** should be impacting my performance in this physical world.
- 2. It is God's** intention for our behavior to **reveal** His presence in our lives **prior** to the glorification of our bodies. After we're glorified all will see we were born again.  **Question 4**


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### C. How should this principle impact my life?

1. **When I evaluate the growth of my relationship with Christ,** am I seeing the way I talk being influenced by the Holy Spirit's presence in my life?
2. **Am I permitting the world, the devil and my old habits** to influence my conversations and actions and thought life more than God's Word and communion with Christ?
3. **Am I seeing God's power in my life** or am I living out my Christianity from habit or routine?

**3.  Group Discussion** (⊕ 10 min.) Based on the time remaining, here are some suggested discussion questions. You may or may not have time enough for all of them.

*(Reminder: Are you facilitating the group's discussion or doing most of the talking during this time?)*

- **What part do I play in gaining my new spiritual identity?** / *am powerless to do anything but accept God's free gift of eternal life. I accept it by believing in Jesus' completed work of 2000 years ago.*
- **What about my rebirth would enable "good works" to be performed?** *The way in which God infuses new birth into us is by the co-crucifixion with Christ of the old spirit and the sealed indwelling, life-maintaining residency of the Holy Spirit. New life is imparted by the Holy Spirit's **residency** and with that new partnership, is a new **power source**.  **Question 5***
- **My identity in Christ should result in my behavior showing good works. What are "good works?"** *Behavior or performance that mirrors Christ-likeness and carries with it an eternal quality.*

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**4. ↩ Review / Preview** (⌚ 5 min.) (What is the group learning to do that they can repeat when they are away from the group or this study is completed?)

### 🔑 If You Forget Everything Else, Remember...

What does "being made alive" spiritually have to do with this life here and now? 🖐️ **Question 6**

Because the Holy Spirit permanently lives in me, I have the **ability** and a **calling** to **impact eternity** during my life here and now.

### If you're curious and want to know more...

**Cross Reference Bible Reading** *Born spiritually dead:* Ps. 51:5; Gal. 5:16; 1 Pet. 4:3. *Spiritual life and new behavior:* Gal. 5:17, 22-25; John 15:8, 16; Rom. 6:6-7. *Crucified with Christ and raised with Christ:* Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:12-13; Rom. 6:4-5.

### Getting Ready for Next Week

1. Remember your alone time with God - prayer & Bible reading
2. Bible memory key verse for next week's study: **Eph. 2:18**
3. 🔑 Key question for **next week's** study:

How does God turn prejudice into compassion?

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