

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

EPHESIANS 1-6 (KJV) · AUGUST 27, 2026

1. STUDY TITLE

Alive in Christ: From Death to Grace

2. FOCUS PASSAGE

Ephesians 2:1–10

Key Verse:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8–9

3. BIG IDEA / MAIN POINT

We were spiritually dead in our sins and utterly helpless to save ourselves, but God, rich in mercy and love, made us alive together with Christ by grace alone—saving us to live as His redeemed masterpiece doing the good works He prepared for us.

4. SESSION OVERVIEW (FOR THE LEADER)

- **Suggested time:** 60–90 minutes
- **Goal of the study:** To help group members grasp the gravity of human spiritual deadness, marvel at the sovereign mercy of God in quickening sinners through union with Christ, and live with joy as His new creation.
- **Special notes:** Verses 1–3 describe spiritual death and divine wrath, which can feel heavy. Ensure you give adequate weight to the condition of the lost so that the transition in verse 4 ("But God...") shines with maximum gospel brilliance.

5. OPENING (10–12 MIN)

Welcome: "Welcome, everyone! I'm so glad we're together today. Today we are looking at one of the most powerful passages in all of Scripture—a passage that reveals where we were, what God did for us, and who we are now in Christ."

Icebreaker Question: "Think of a time you received a gift that you could never have earned or paid for yourself. What was it, and how did receiving it make you feel?"

Opening Prayer: "Heavenly Father, we thank You for gathering us around Your Holy Word today. We ask that Your Spirit would open our eyes to see the depth of Your grace and the beauty of Jesus Christ. Strip away any self-reliance in our hearts, and fill us with fresh wonder for our salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen."

6. CONTEXT & SETTING THE SCENE (3–5 MIN)

The Apostle Paul wrote this letter while imprisoned in Rome around AD 60–62. He wrote to the believers in Ephesus—a city filled with idolatry, pagan worship, and worldly philosophy—to ground them in their eternal spiritual identity.

In chapter 1, Paul celebrated God's sovereign grace: how the Father chose us before the foundation of the world, redeemed us through the blood of His Son, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise. Now in chapter 2, Paul zooms in on the miracle of individual salvation. He contrasts what humanity is by nature with what believers become by God's supernatural grace.

Let's read the passage together.

7. READ THE PASSAGE

Leader Note: Invite one person to read verses 1–10 aloud. Then, pause for a moment and ask a second person to read the text a second time so the group can listen carefully to the progression.

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:1–10

8. OBSERVATION QUESTIONS (“WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?”)

1. In verses 1–3, how does Paul describe our condition before God saved us? What words does he use to depict our spiritual state?
2. According to verses 2–3, what three forces influenced our former way of life (“walk”)?
3. What pivot phrase appears at the beginning of verse 4, and what specific attributes of God are named right after it?
4. What three things does God do for believers in verses 5–6 in relation to Jesus Christ?
5. According to verses 8–9, what is the origin of our salvation, and what role do human works play in acquiring it?
6. In verse 10, what title or metaphor does Paul use to describe believers, and what purpose does he state for our new creation?

9. INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS (“WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?”)

1. Paul states that we were “dead in trespasses and sins” (v. 1). Why is the word “dead” so crucial here rather than “sick,” “weak,” or “confused”? What does spiritual deadness imply about a person’s ability to save themselves?
2. Verse 4 begins with the phrase “But God.” Why is this turning point so fundamental to the gospel? How does it demonstrate that salvation is entirely of God’s initiative?
3. Paul notes in verse 6 that God “made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” What does our union with Christ mean for our spiritual security and present standing before God?
4. Read verses 8–9. How does Paul’s emphasis on salvation being “the gift of God” strip away human boasting? How does this connect with Paul’s teaching in Romans 3:27–28?
5. In verse 10, Paul calls us God’s “workmanship” (from the Greek word *poiema*, meaning a crafted masterpiece). How does this verse clarify the relationship between faith, grace, and good works? Are good works the cause of salvation or the fruit of it?
6. Verse 10 mentions that God “hath before ordained” good works for us. What does this reveal about God’s sovereign care over the life of a Christian after salvation?

10. APPLICATION QUESTIONS (“HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE US?”)

1. **Personal reflection:** When you recall who you were apart from Christ (or where your heart would be without His grace), how does that deepen your daily gratitude to God?

2. **Heart check:** In what ways are you still tempted to rely on your own moral efforts, religious performance, or good behavior to feel accepted by God or others?
3. **Identity in Christ:** How does knowing that you are God's handcrafted masterpiece (*workmanship*) combat feelings of insecurity, worthlessness, or self-condemnation?
4. **Community / Group:** How can we as a small group encourage one another to rest in Christ's finished work when someone in our group is struggling with guilt or spiritual burnout?
5. **Witness & Evangelism:** How does the truth that God quickens the dead give us hope and boldness when praying for or sharing the gospel with family members or friends who seem completely resistant to Christ?
6. **Gospel reminder:** Why is it essential to remember that salvation is 100% by grace when we encounter our own ongoing flaws and shortcomings?
7. **Personal Action Prompt:** Take 60 seconds of silence, then complete this statement in your heart or on paper:
"Because I am saved by grace alone and created for good works, this week I will step out in faith to..."

11. RESPONSE & CLOSING (10–15 MIN)

Reflective Moment: Spend 1–2 minutes in silent reflection. Thank the Lord for the "But God" moment in your own life—the moment His mercy quickened your dead heart and gave you faith in Jesus.

Corporate Prayer of Response: (*The leader can read this prayer aloud, or invite the group to pray it together*)

"Lord God Almighty, we acknowledge that we were dead in our sins, helpless and without hope. But in Your rich mercy and great love, You made us alive together with Christ. We thank You that our salvation is Your sovereign gift, not earned by our works, so that all glory belongs to You alone. Help us to walk boldly as Your workmanship this week, stepping into the good works You have prepared for us. Amen."

Prayer Requests: Take time to share personal prayer requests across the group, especially noting areas where members need grace, rest from spiritual striving, or boldness in good works.

Closing Prayer: (*Leader prays for the specific requests shared by the group*)

Take-Home Memory Verse:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8–9