

# A Vision For God's Family

## Key Verses

### Ephesians 2:1-10

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

## Principles

Ephesians chapter two provides a necessary framework for understanding the position of all people, including your children, before God. In these verses, we find a fabulous outline of how God views all people and how He has interacted in human history for the benefit of all people. The clear conclusion is this: God's ultimate desire is to restore all people to life in His Family as sons and daughters. He created every person for the purpose of a full life that is lived out of a perfect family relationship in the Trinity. That is the aim of God for all people. If that is His aim, then we must consider the application of the principles of this passage toward our children.

Consider deeply the following principles derived from this passage with a specific aim to their application toward you, as a parent, in how you view your children.

1. **“You were dead... by nature children of wrath.”** This principle applies to us as parents, but also to our children. In a culture that tells us the opposite, God informs us here that our children are born in a state of sin. They are, by nature, rebels against God and us as their parents, living in the family of Satan. This is harsh, but true, and it must inform how we view and parent them. They are

desperately in need of spiritual transformation because of this, and, primarily through us as their loving parents, God desires to restore them to Himself and His Family.

2. **“But God, through love, made us alive.”** God is the one who provides a way of salvation and redemption for your child. He steps into their life to offer a way of salvation and new life. He not only forgives them, but He also desires to make them alive again with Him. This is a relational “alive-ness,” meaning a deeply restored union with Him as their Father.
3. **“God seated us with Christ in the heavenly places.”** Through the representative work of Jesus on our behalf and our faith in His work, we are spiritually united with Him. Through this spiritual union, we are lifted up out of this earthly family and properly seated in our new family in the Trinity. As parents, then, we must view these earthly families as beautiful contexts for preparing our children for life in their Heavenly Family. We are stewards of our children, seeking to faithfully model the family of God and prepare them for life in it.
4. **“In the coming ages, God would show us His immeasurable grace.”** God’s ultimate desire for our children is that they would be restored to His perfect and loving Family, that He might spend all of eternity demonstrating His love to them. We are called to love and raise our children for this eternal purpose. God has given us the tremendous privilege of raising them to restore them to their true Heavenly Father and His Family, that they would receive the best that He has for them.

These truths must be understood by the biblically-minded parent in a personal sense and in application toward their children. Parenting is not about surviving, but rather, it is about positioning our children to be restored to a full life in God’s family. We are not ultimately seeking the best life for them here on earth in “our” family, but the richest and truest eternal life for them in God’s. The more that we are informed and motivated by this, the better parents that we will be.

## Questions/Discussion

Here are a few discussion questions that might assist you as you lead others into a meaningful discussion/ journey through the topic of parenting. These are deep and intended to bring deep consideration and discussion with parents you are discipling. Make sure to allot ample time to think through them prior to discussion.

1. Take some time to reflect on your childhood family context. How do you think that past experience has shaped you as a parent? (A good starting point is to consider the ways that your parenting is either similar to or different than that of your parents.)
2. What most influences your style of parenting? (Books, podcasts, other parents, etc)
3. Why is it difficult to view your children as sinners and rebels against us and God?
4. Is it challenging for you to consider that you are a steward of your children and that they ultimately belong to God and not you? Why do you think that is?
5. Take some time to pray for yourself as a parent, that you might be shaped and formed by God’s view of you as a son or daughter in His Family.
6. Take some time to pray that your child might come to fully know his/her position in the Family of God and experience the life that God has prepared for them.

## Further Study/Discipleship

Growing as parents and discipling others in this particular area is not for the faint of heart; nor is it accomplished through one short video and discussion. Below is a list of a few additional passages that can be used for further discussion with those you are discipling through this content.

### **Genesis 1-4**

If necessary, go back to Genesis 1-4 to build a foundational understanding of your child's need for salvation and restoration into God's Family. Here are some key principles in the Genesis narrative:

1. Adam and Eve were created by God for a deep, familial relationship with Him.
2. Adam and Eve chose independence from God and the relationship was broken.
3. Adam and Eve's children were born outside of the Garden of Eden, signifying that their parents' choices impacted them as well. They were born in the state of sin and separation from God.
4. Cain and Abel were offered a path of restoration to God as well.

### **Romans 3:9-26**

Romans 3 provides a doctrinal summary of the events and implications of Genesis 1-3 on humanity. In a very systematic and succinct manner, Paul gives explanation to the sin problem of all people and their need for salvation into the Family of God:

1. No one is righteous on their own merits.
2. All people have personally fallen short of God's perfect, righteous standard.
3. God's righteous standard, found in His Law, condemns all people.
4. God freely provides the righteousness of Jesus Himself to all people.
5. Jesus' righteousness comes through personal faith in the free gift of His substitutionary work of sacrificial death for us, in our place.
6. This righteousness from Jesus joins us to Him as we assume His position in the family of God.

### **1 John 3:1-3**

The Apostle John also spoke of this necessary work of God in redeeming and restoring all people, including our children, to His Family. Note these basic principles that he outlines in his first epistle:

1. God demonstrates love to us, as a Father.
2. He calls us His children, members of His Family.
3. There is a future reality of this new Family life that is yet to come; yet to be fully completed.
4. This offer of new life in the Family of God, when personally accepted, brings spiritual purity to us.