

Comprehensive Review & Study Guide: Becoming Precedes Doing

Source: Pastor Curtis Holt – Sermon on Ephesians 2:8–10

Date: October 26, 2023


Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV & Passion Translation)

Overview

This guide combines a full briefing and devotional study of Pastor Curtis’ sermon, *"Becoming Precedes Doing,"* centered on Ephesians 2:8–10. Pastor Curtis teaches that Christian living flows from identity in Christ (“being”) rather than religious striving (“doing”). Salvation, faith, and grace are presented as divine gifts, and good works are shown to be the natural result of union with Christ—not a currency to earn favor. Believers are God’s masterpieces (*poēma*), created for preordained good works tied to their God-given destinies.


5-Day Devotional: Living from Identity in Christ

Day 1: The Gift Bundle – Grace, Faith & Salvation

 *Ephesians 2:8-9*


NKJV: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

TPT: “For by grace you have been saved by faith. Nothing you did could ever earn this salvation, for it was the love gift from God that brought us to Christ! So no one will ever be able to boast, for salvation is never a reward for good works or human striving.”

 **Key Truth:** Salvation is a total gift—grace, faith, and salvation all originate from God.

 **Quote:**

“Faith does not create. Faith is what you put your faith out... You see what you want, and you put your faith out there and it creates these realities. And I submit to you that that's why faith hasn't worked. Because we thought that faith was going to create this for me. And I see this thing that I want and I say, I want this. And I'm putting my faith out there to do it. But see, the problem is that grace never made it available. And if grace didn't make it available, then faith can't appropriate it. Faith appropriates what grace has already made available.”

 **Reflection:** Are you striving to earn what has already been freely given?



Prayer: Thank You, Father, for grace, faith, and salvation as gifts. Help me receive them fully.

Day 2: Masterpiece Identity – You Are God’s Poem



Ephesians 2:10

NKJV: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

TPT: “We have become his poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One...”



Key Truth: You are God’s *poēma*—a unique masterpiece.



Quote:

“Becoming precedes doing. Religion tells you the exact opposite. You do so that you can then become. And as you follow these guidelines, then you become a good Christian. Here's the problem: You were never intended to be a good Christian. You were intended to be a son or a daughter. A son or a daughter doesn't operate from a place of doing so that they can become. They operate from a place of understanding who they have become.”



Reflection: Do you believe your value comes from who you are in Christ—not what you do?



Prayer: Jesus, help me see myself as Your crafted artistry.

Day 3: In Christ – Union, Not Striving



John 15:5 / Ephesians 2:10

NKJV: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

TPT: “I am the sprouting vine and you’re my branches. As you live in union with me as your source, fruitfulness will stream from within you—but when you live separated from me you are powerless.”





Key Truth: Good works are fruit from union with Christ—not effort.



Quote:

“When we are focused on our life union with him, we don't have to strive to produce the fruit. It's produced from our nature. It just happens. I'm convinced that many of us would see a lot more fruit in our life if we would stop striving to produce fruit.”

 *Reflection:* Are you producing fruit or working in the flesh?


 *Prayer:* Let my life union with Christ produce lasting fruit.

Day 4: Good Works – Fruit, Not Currency

 *Titus 3:5 / Ephesians 2:10c*

NKJV: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...”

TPT: “He came to save us, not because of any virtuous deed that we have done but only because of his extravagant mercy.”

 *Key Truth:* Good works are not a price tag for God’s favor.


 *Quote:*

“Good works are not currency. They don't buy you favor with God. Religion tells us that when we do good works, then we get favor. There's nothing in the new covenant that says our works produce favor with God. In fact, the new covenant actually points to the favor of God being on our life and that actually helping us to produce good works.”

 *Reflection:* Do you ever perform to try to earn God’s love?


 *Prayer:* Father, let all I do come from gratitude—not striving.


Day 5: Destiny Unfolds as You Walk

 *Ephesians 2:10*

NKJV: “...created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”


TPT: “...God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it!”

 *Key Truth:* Your path is pre-arranged—discovered through relationship.

 *Quote:*

“Your destiny isn’t something you invent—it’s something you uncover by walking in union with Christ. Ask yourself: What draws you? What pulls you? What are you passionate about? Who are you passionate about? What people group stirs your heart? When you see injustice or a specific need, is there a passion in you to bring a solution? These are the breadcrumbs that lead to your prepared works.”

 *Reflection:* What passion or burden might be pointing you to your divine calling?

 *Prayer:* Lord, lead me into the works You've already prepared for me.

Final Declaration

**“I am His workmanship, joined to Jesus. My good works were prepared before I was born
—so I walk in them by grace through faith.”**

Main Themes At A Glance.

- **Salvation:** More than forgiveness—includes healing, wholeness, and fullness of life.
“Nothing missing, nothing broken, fully alive.”
- **Faith:** A gift that receives what grace has already provided.
“He gives us the faith to receive what He's already done.”
- **Identity Before Activity:**
“Becoming precedes doing. Religion tells you the opposite—you do so that you can become.”
- **You Are God's Masterpiece** (*poēma*)
“He created me to be a masterpiece.”
- **Jesus as Prototype:**
“The Father identified Jesus as His beloved Son before He opened any blind eyes... not because of what He's done, but because of who He is.”
- **Union Produces Fruit:**
“When we are focused on our life union with Him, we don't have to strive to produce the fruit.”
- **Good Works Are Fruit, Not Currency:**
“You can't work your way into anything but self-righteousness.”
- **Destiny Is Discovered, Not Invented:**
“God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it.”

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Salvation** – More than forgiveness; includes healing and wholeness.
- **Grace** – God’s unearned favor.
- **Faith** – A gift from God that appropriates grace.
- **Gift Bundle** – Grace, faith, and salvation received from God.
- **Poēma** – Greek for “workmanship” or “poetry,” referring to believers as masterpieces.
- **Prototype** – Jesus is the first of many sons; our model.
- **Union with Christ** – The life-giving connection to Jesus.
- **Good Works** – Fruit of grace, not currency to earn blessing.
- **Prepared Beforehand** – Works assigned by God in advance.
- **Walk (peripatéō)** – A lifestyle of dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- **Destiny** – God’s preordained plan and purpose for your life.

Briefing Document: 'Becoming Precedes Doing'

Source: Sermon by Pastor Curtis Holt (based on Ephesians 2:8–10)

Date: October 26, 2023

Subject: Review of Key Themes and Ideas from Pastor Curtis' Sermon

Key Passage: Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV & Passion Translation)

Summary:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and most important ideas presented by **Pastor Curtis** in his sermon titled "*Becoming Precedes Doing*," based on Ephesians 2:8–10. The core message emphasizes that a Christian's "doing" (good works) flows naturally from their "being" (identity in Christ), a concept that stands in contrast to religious striving. Pastor Curtis reiterates the understanding of salvation as a comprehensive gift (including healing, wholeness, and forgiveness), clarifies that faith itself is a gift from God, and highlights the significance of resting in one's identity as God's "workmanship" or "masterpiece." Good works are presented as the fruit of union with Christ, prearranged by God as a path to fulfill individual destiny and advance His kingdom.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

The Gift Bundle: Grace, Faith, and Salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- **Salvation is a Comprehensive Gift:** Pastor Curtis begins by emphasizing that salvation is far more than forgiveness of sin. It is a "gift bundle" that includes forgiveness, healing (of body and mind), and wholeness—described as "nothing missing, nothing broken, and fully alive."
"Salvation is much more... If it was only forgiveness of sin, then praise God, that would be an amazing gift. But... I should want to partake of everything that Jesus has made available."
- **Faith is also a Gift:** Pastor Curtis stresses that faith is not something we generate. Like grace and salvation, it is given by God.
"We don't conjure up faith. He gives us the faith to receive what he's already done."
- **Faith Appropriates, Does Not Create:** Faith doesn't generate outcomes but receives what grace has already made available.
"Faith appropriates what grace has already made available."
- **No Room for Boasting:** Pastor Curtis explains that since grace, faith, and salvation all come from God, there is no place for human boasting.

“If the gift of grace and the gift of salvation is received by the gift of faith, there's nothing for me to boast in.” “Salvation is never... a reward for good works or human striving.”

Identity First: Becoming Precedes Doing (Ephesians 2:10 – “Workmanship”)

- **Becoming Precedes Doing:** This central theme contrasts a religious mindset (do to become) with a kingdom mindset (become, then do).
“Becoming precedes doing... Religion tells you the exact opposite.”
- **We Are God’s Workmanship/Poetry:** Pastor Curtis unpacks the Greek word *poēma*, noting it means “crafted artistry.”
“We have become his poetry... Workmanship is the Greek word poema.” “He actually created me to be a masterpiece.”
- **Significance Redefined:** True significance stems from identity in Christ, not worldly success.
“Your significance is in who you are, in Christ... That will come your contribution to the earth.” “Significance... looks like sons or daughters manifesting the character... of their Father.”
- **Working From, Not For, Acceptance:** We work *from* a place of acceptance, not *for* it.
“We work from acceptance, not for acceptance.”
- **Our Being is a Completed Act:** Pastor Curtis emphasizes that we are already made new, and the Christian life is about becoming who we already are.
“Our being is a completed act.” “We spend the rest of our life becoming who we already are... by following Holy Spirit.”
- **Jesus as the Prototype:** Jesus modeled this truth; the Father affirmed His identity before He performed any works.
“The Father said, This is My beloved Son... Not because of what he's done, but because of who he is.”

The Source of Works: Union with Christ (Ephesians 2:10 – “Created in Christ Jesus”)

- **Union with Christ is the Source:** Good works flow from life union with Jesus.
“Union with Christ leads to works. But it's from a place of union, not earning.” “When we are focused on our life union with him... fruit... just happens.”
- **Fruit vs. Work:** Pastor Curtis explains the contrast between fruit (Spirit) and work (flesh).
“The flesh produces work, the Spirit produces fruit.”

The Purpose of Works: Destiny and Impact (Ephesians 2:10 – “For good works... prepared beforehand”)

- **Works as Fruit, Not Currency:** Good works don’t earn favor; they are the result of grace.
“Good works are not currency. They don't buy you favor with God.” “Good works flow out of grace. They don't secure it.”
- **Works Were Prepared Beforehand:** God prearranged our good works as part of our divine calling.
“Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it.”
- **Works Fulfill Destiny and Advance the Kingdom:** Every believer’s good works are part of their God-given destiny.
“The path for us to walk out is to bring about the completion of our destiny.” “The destiny... plays a role in the advancing of his kingdom in the earth.”
- **Identifying Your Prepared Works:** Pastor Curtis points to passion and divine prompting as clues to one’s prepared works.
“What draws you to it? What are you passionate about?... There's a passion... to come up with some kind of solution.”

Walking in Them: Ongoing Dependence (Ephesians 2:10 – “That we should walk in them”)

- **"Walk" Implies Lifestyle and Dependence:** Walking refers to daily, Spirit-led living.
“Anytime Paul uses the word walk... he's talking about our lifestyle.” “The deeper I get...

the more I have to... stay connected to Him.”

- **Faith as Trust and Dependence:** Pastor Curtis affirms that faith pleases God not by merit, but by trust.
“Faith pleases him because it shows trust... and dependence upon Him.”

Conclusion:

This message emphasizes the transformative truth that Christian living is fundamentally about *being in Christ*, out of which flows natural, Spirit-empowered *doing*. His message dismantles religious striving and establishes that grace, faith, and salvation are complete gifts from God. Believers are encouraged to rest in their identity as God’s masterpieces, knowing their good works are prearranged paths toward fulfilling destiny and advancing God’s kingdom. Shifting from *“I have to perform”* to *“I get to flow from who I am in Christ”* is presented as key to living the fullness of the Christian life.

Quiz Questions

1. What is the traditional (and incomplete) understanding of salvation, according to Pastor Curtis?
2. What does the “gift bundle” in Ephesians 2:8–9 include?
3. How does Pastor Curtis differentiate between faith creating and appropriating?
4. What does “becoming precedes doing” mean in contrast to religious thinking?
5. What is the meaning of the Greek word *poēma*?
6. How is Jesus a prototype for believers?
7. Why did God affirm Jesus before His ministry began?
8. What does the vine and branches analogy reveal about good works?
9. Why are good works described as fruit rather than currency?
10. What does “prepared beforehand” suggest about your destiny?

Essay Prompts

- Analyze Pastor Curtis’ view of salvation beyond forgiveness.
- Compare “doing to become” with “becoming then doing.”

- Reflect on faith as God's gift and how it challenges performance-based religion.
- Explain the significance of being God's *poēma*.
- Describe the relationship between union with Christ and the fruit of good works.