

The Way
Fruit of the Church: Ephesians
Lesson 34: Paul Wrote About the Believers' Past, Present, and Future

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Scripture

Ephesians 2:1-10

Review (Where We've Been)

We must not forget the background of Paul's writing to the Ephesian church...

- Wrote from a Roman prison under house arrest (AD60-62; Acts 28)
- Wrote from a special relationship with Ephesus (visited three times; spent 2 years)
- Wrote from a heart that desired them to continue growing in faith

Unfortunately, 30 years after this writing John wrote a letter to them about their slow fade to apathy in their faith.

Revelation 2:4 (ESV) But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

In Ephesians 1:1-14, Paul reminded them of spiritual blessings they possessed so they could be confident God had fully equipped them to live as He had called them.

In Ephesians 1:15-23 Paul opened his heart to show how he prayed on their behalf...

- **For their continued wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God**
- **That they would know the blessings that are theirs in Christ**
 - ✓ Life on earth is followed by eternal life in heaven
 - ✓ God delights in those who are His now and eternally
 - ✓ Greatness of His power in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit

BIG Idea

While Ephesians 1 discusses the *spiritual blessings* of those who are in Christ, Ephesians 2 will discuss the *spiritual standing* of those who are in Christ.

A *standing* is the knowledge of how someone thinks or feels about you, or your status/position with them.

Where do we stand with God? Paul reveals that those who believe have a **past, present, and future standing** according to God's work on our behalf.

Information (What You Need to Know)

Our Three Standings Before God...

- **Past Standing – Dead to God** (in Adam we were born far from God)

Ephesians 2:1 (ESV) ...you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air [*Satan*], the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **3** 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.

Our actions toward God...

- ✓ We walked in, and were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1-2a)

“Human beings enter the world spiritually dead. They have no inclination or responsiveness toward God and no ability to please Him.” – ESV Study Bible

- ✓ We chased after all that the world, the flesh, and the devil had to offer (2:2b)

Romans 1:18 (ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **19** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

- ✓ We lived in unrestrained passions of the flesh, which we did not deny (2:3)

Romans 1:28 (ESV) And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

- **Present Standing – Alive in Christ**

Ephesians 2:4 (ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— **6** and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

God's actions toward us...

- ✓ His mercy (withholding something deserved) flows out of His love for us

- ✓ He made us alive in Christ

“Christ shared in our death so that we could share in His resurrection life. The old man is crucified, and we are new creations in Jesus with the old things passing away and all things becoming new.” – David Guzik

- ✓ Raised us up with Him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus

Philippians 3:20 (ESV) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body...

- **Future Standing – Trophies of God’s Grace and Glory**

Ephesians 2:7 (ESV) ...so that in the coming ages [*church age, millennial kingdom, New Heaven/Earth*] He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast...

If someone asked God, ‘How do I know You’re loving and gracious?’, His response is to display the church (flawed and sinful, yet forgiven) which demonstrates His grace and kindness. We are a ‘display case’ for the grace of God.

Application (What You Need to Do)

What Now?

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

“Good works cannot produce salvation but will follow and result from Holy Spirit empowered fruits, which God prepared beforehand.” – John MacArthur

James 2:17 (ESV) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.