

Prepared for Good Works

Year-end moments invite reflection. *What is God preparing to do through me next?* God did not save you to park you on a shelf. He saved you *on purpose* for a purpose. And so as we stand on the edge of a new year, our text today should help us reset our thinking. 2026 is not about doing more things. It's about coming to a better understanding of why God has saved us in the first place. Today, we'll talk about what God says about who you are and what He has already prepared for you to walk in.

I. Ephesians 2:8-9: Saved by Grace: The Foundation, Not the Finish Line

- A. Ephesians 2:8a: *For you are saved by grace through faith, ...*
 - 1. Salvation begins with God - not us. God acted when we were powerless to fix ourselves.
 - 2. Ephesians 2:9: *not from works, so that no one can boast.* When we come to the cross, the ground is perfectly level.
- B. We must not misunderstand grace.
 - 1. Grace is not opposed to effort. Grace is opposed to *earning*.
 - 2. Works are not irrelevant. But they are the wrong foundation. God gets all the glory in our salvation - not us.
 - a) Grace doesn't remove responsibility - it removes anxiety.
 - b) You have been saved from self-reliance so you can live in faithful obedience.

II. Ephesians 2:10: We Are His Workmanship - A New Identity

- A. Ephesians 2:10a: *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...*
- B. Ephesians 2:10a: It's not that you **were** His workmanship. He says **you are**. A present reality.
- C. Where the new identity comes from:
 - 1. Ephesians 2:10b: *created in Christ Jesus ...*
 - 2. Created: "to be brought into existence."
 - a) Ephesians 4:24: *and to put on the new self, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.*
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:17: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation ...*

III. Ephesians 2:10: Created for Good Works - Prepared Ahead of Time

- A. Ephesians 2:10c: *created in Christ Jesus for good works,*
 - 1. Good works are not a bonus feature of the Christian life. *They are part of its design.*
- B. Your service is not accidental:
 - 1. Ephesians 2:10d: *which God prepared ahead of time...*
- C. Three important truths:
 - 1. Good works are intentional
 - 2. Good works are personal: Paul says these works were prepared *for us.*
 - 3. Good works are ready - we do them, not invent them
 - a) Ephesians 2:10e (NASB): *so that we would walk in them.*

IV. As We Close

- A. God intends the local church to function together.
- B. We are His body (1:22); We are in His household (2:19); We are a living structure (2:21)
- C. God is not asking you to do everything, but he is asking you do **something**.
- D. What is one good work you can walk in this year?
- E. The path has been prepared. Will you walk in it?