



Ephesians 2:1–10 (NRSV)

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Opening

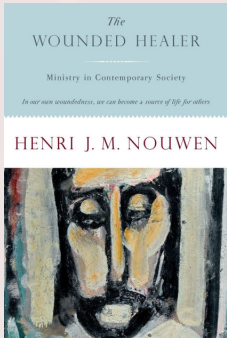
- 1. Pray:** Gracious God, thank you for the gift of this new season and the opportunity to gather together. We come to you with open hearts, ready to learn more about your love. Help us to experience your love and share it with one another. Amen.
- 2. Share:** What is one of your earliest memories, and what do you think it reveals about you?

Dive Into the Text

- What do verses 1-2 mean about being dead in “trespasses and sins”?
- Why does Paul emphasize that this is “not your own doing”—that we are saved by grace?
- What does verse 10 mean by “created in Christ Jesus for good works” as a way of life?

The Wounded Healer

Read this excerpt from Henri Nouwen's book,
The Wounded Healer.



Who can take away suffering without entering it? The wounded healer is not a man who in his own person has already found the solution to the problems of his fellow human beings; on the

contrary, he is a man who in his own life has come to experience the pain of these problems in such a profound way that he has become a source of healing for others. It is precisely because he has been wounded that he can be a source of healing. It is not our personal strength but our weakness, not our success but our failure, not our power but our helplessness, not our wholeness but our brokenness that makes us able to be a source of healing.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Doubleday, 1972.

Make Love The Goal

Pursue **love** and strive for the **spiritual gifts**...

1 Corinthians 14:1a

Go Deeper

1. In what ways can we see human brokenness as a point of connection instead of division?
2. Where have you experienced love serve as a strength in the face of hatred and evil?
3. In what ways can you die to self (with Christ) to be resurrected with Christ in love, compassion, and a commitment to justice and peace?
4. What steps can you take this week to continue to make Love the goal of your life—as Jesus calls us, "they will know you are my disciples by how you love one another"?

Close in Prayer

Close your time in prayer together.