


Past and Present

TEACHING NOTES

 **Past condition (Ephesians 2:1-3)**

 Life without Christ

What is the solution to this problem?

KEY VERSES

Ephesians 2:1-22

KEY THEMES

Life without Christ
Salvation through Christ
Life with Christ

INTRODUCTION INNOCECE CONSCIENCE HUMAN GOVT. PROMISE LAW GRACE

**Present position (Ephesians 2:4-22)**

Saved from the power of sin

Saved by grace through faith

Unity in the Church

Lesson objective: *To understand what Christ saved us from and what He saved us for*

PERSONAL STUDY**Prepare your heart and mind**

Begin this time of study with prayer. Ask God to help you push away distractions and focus on Him. Ask Him to bless this time by providing clarity and revealing truth.

Past condition

What was your life like before coming to know Christ? If you became a Christian at an early age, what might your life be like today if you didn't know Christ?

**Read Ephesians 2:1-3**

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.

According to these verses what is life like before knowing Christ?

**Read Romans 5:12, 6:23, and 8:5-9**

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. (Romans 5:12)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) (Romans 8:5-9)

According to these verses, what is the difference between being under sin's control and the Spirit's control?

We should never forget where we've come from and who we were in Adam. We used to be God's enemies. But now He calls us His friends, His children. We used to be under sin's control, which leads to death. But now we are under the Spirit's control, which leads to life.

To help you remember that life changing transition, summarize what Jesus did for you.

Empathy

Being aware of our past condition should move us to have empathy toward nonbelievers. But empathy is something we're not very good at. It doesn't come naturally to us. One reason may be because we don't know exactly what it is. We're not sure if it's sympathy, or more than sympathy, or something else completely. So, let's spend some time unpacking this.

In your own words, how would you define the difference between sympathy and empathy?

Sympathy is the feeling that you are sorry for and care about someone else's trouble, grief, or misfortune; that you have sorrow or pity for them. Empathy is the feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions; the ability to share someone else's feelings.

Empathy is much deeper than sympathy. With empathy you're more connected to that person. You have empathy for someone when you've been through what they're going through or you can feel their pain as if it is your own.

When you think about the struggle of the flesh and spirit and your life before coming to know Christ, you can look at nonbelievers with empathy. You know what it's like to be under sin's control rather than God's grace.

So, we should remember our past condition and be thankful for the work God did in our lives, but keep our past struggle in mind when we view those who don't know Christ yet. So often we judge nonbelievers; we hold them to our standards and become confused, frustrated, and angry with them. But we should know what their lives are like and be moved by empathy to extend compassion and love to them. And we should be moved to want to share Christ with them so they can experience His freedom and grace like we have.

What are a few struggles of nonbelievers that move you to feel empathy?

What are some practical things you can do to put your empathy into action?

Key verse

Put to memory Ephesians 2:4-5. Place the provided scripture card somewhere you can see it throughout the day.

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

Prayer time

Close your time of study with prayer. Thank God for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ and ask Him to help you to never forget what you have in Christ. Pray that God would help you grow in empathy for those that don't yet know Him, and that you could extend compassion and grace to them rather than frustration and judgment.

Session 2

Prepare your heart and mind

Take a minute or two to get quiet before the Lord. Ask Him to help you focus on what He has for you in this time.

Present position

It's important to understand our position in Christ and not be distracted by the condition of our life. Because of Christ's work on the cross, our position is secure. Once we placed our faith in Christ, we were made righteous before God. The work of Christ is done and we are saved by the amazing grace of God.

*"Most Christians make the mistake of trying to walk in order to be able to sit, but that is a reversal of the true order. Our natural reason says, 'If we do not walk, how can we ever reach the goal? What can we attain without effort? How can we get anywhere if we do not move?' But Christianity is a strange business! If at the outset we try to do anything, we miss everything. For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE. Thus Ephesians opens with the statement that God has 'blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ' and we are invited at the outset to sit down and enjoy what God has done for us; not to set out to try and attain it for ourselves." Watchman Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*, adapted*

**Read Ephesians 2:4-7**

Why did God take action on our behalf?

What did Christ do for you the moment you placed your faith in Him?



In this day and age, we have become accustomed to finding a catch in every promise. We think, 'If it's too good to be true it can't be, right?' or 'What do I have to do to gain favor with someone?' Or we ask, 'What's the catch?'

God's amazing grace is given to us by nothing that we have done to earn or deserve it. There is no catch. God has an incomprehensible love for us. When we were yet His enemy, He provided His son for our salvation. This is a love we can only begin to imagine, this is amazing grace.

Why do think this kind of love is so hard to accept?

**Read Ephesians 2:8-9**

Grace means unmerited favor that we receive without doing anything to deserve it. Because of the work of Christ on the cross, we are in right standing before a holy God.

Why is it important that grace is unmerited?

What are some ways people try to earn right standing?

Knowing we have been extended this amazing grace helps us to live in the power of God. Beginning to understand the power of God's grace brings about change in us. We no longer rely on human effort or our flesh, but trust in God's grace. Our identity is in right standing because of who we are in Christ. Our position is perfect, yet our daily condition is a life-long process. God is helping us grow to be more Christ-like.

**Read Ephesians 2:10**

How does the creator of the universe view you?

Based on this verse, why were we created in Christ Jesus?

If you are viewed as God's masterpiece, how do you display God to those around you?

Key verse

Continue working to memorize Ephesians 2:4-5. Attempt to write it out from memory:

Prayer time

Spend some time thanking God for His amazing grace. Identify someone you struggle to extend grace toward. Pray specifically for your ability to love those who are difficult to love. Ask Him to help you understand more fully what He has done for you in offering you grace. Ask God to help you live in, and display the power of, His amazing grace.

PARENT GUIDE

Read Ephesians 2: 1-9 together

(You may want to read from a children's Bible so your kids can better understand what the passage is saying.)

Explain that grace is getting something that you don't deserve. When we talk about God's grace we mean salvation and a relationship with Jesus. We cannot do anything to earn God's grace. God's grace isn't based on how good we are or the good things we do.

Explain that the good things we do or our goodness cannot get us to Heaven. We cannot earn Heaven by being good. It is a gift we are given by God for free. We need God's grace to be a friend of Jesus and live in Heaven forever. When we accept God's grace gift, God wants us to tell everyone what He has done for us.

Explain that we have received saving grace and will live forever in Heaven with Jesus. We also receive grace each day that guides how we live our lives before God and with people. Grace receivers are designed to be grace givers. What are some of the ways we could give grace to others?

Materials: A sheet of paper, pencil, and a large-size rubber band

Activity 1

Write the word GOOD on a sheet of paper. Draw a line or an "X" through the letters that spell GOD. Only the letter "O" is left... a zero. This is how our goodness looks without God and His Spirit in our lives and hearts. Our goodness without God is nothing. Our goodness doesn't make God love us more or love us less. God loves us knowing we have nothing to give Him.

Activity 2

Place the large rubber band around your index or pointer fingers, forming an oval shape. Ask you kids the following questions and as they gives responses, have them use fingers to enlarge or expand the rubber band, to visually illustrate how God's gift of grace expands in our life and in our world — through us!

What's a word or phrase that describes God's grace?

When have you experienced grace at home or school?

How does grace feel and look?

How do you know when grace is present? And when it's not?

How is grace shared with others?

ADDITIONAL STUDY**Read Ephesians 2:19-3:21****Observation**

(Who? When? Where? Why? What does it say? What do I notice?)

Interpretation

*(What are the key themes or truths? What is the writer's intended meaning? What is the context?
What questions do I have?)*

Application

(How do I apply it? What does this mean for me?)

