

SESSION 3 (Joint): THE MAN'S SOLUTION (Ephesians 2 v 4-10)

BIG IDEA:

Because God is a loving God, full of grace (undeserved kindness), He has given us life and a place with Him in heaven through His Son. Amazing!

GUIDANCE FOR QUESTIONS

1 – 2. These will help you check that the teenager grasped the main message of 2 v 1-3: that we are spiritually dead because of our sin, facing God's deserved anger, or "wrath".

If he struggles then, since it's a short section, do just read it through and take him through it gently. It is the first study he's done on his own in this booklet, and may be the first study he's ever done on his own!

3. "But" means that there is something to say which is the opposite to, or the solution to, what's gone before. So in Ephesians 2 v 4, it means that us facing God's deserved anger isn't the end of the story. There's still hope!

If your teenager is confident and is reasonably happy reading the Bible on his own, it is worth pointing out that looking out for linking words often helps us understand the meaning of a passage. Here "But" (as in Romans 3 v 21) is crucial. Other linking words include:

- *"Therefore"*—ask "What's the therefore there for?". It means: "Given what I've just said, here's how it applies" (eg: Romans 12 v1).
- *"So"*—is the shorter version of "Therefore".
- *"For"*—is the opposite of "therefore". It tells you why you should do the thing you've just been told to do (eg: Ephesians 5 v 8).

4. Verse 5—Made us alive. We were dead, facing eternity without God (v 1-3). Now we are alive, in relationship with God.

Verse 6—Raised us up with Christ. Just as Jesus rose from the dead to begin eternal life, so also has anyone who believes in Him.

Paul does not mention the cross explicitly in Ephesians 2 v 1-10, and so neither does the study. But as you go through, it is worth asking your teenager *how* people who are dead because of their disobedience can be made alive again. Remind him that in 1 v 7 we found that the way God redeems or "buys us back" is "through [Christ's] blood"; then perhaps use a verse such as 1 Peter 3 v 18—"Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" to make the following points, using the language of Ephesians 2 v 1-10:

- Christ, even though He was perfect ie: righteous, died a spiritual death of separation from God, which people who are disobedient deserve.
- He did this "for sins", in other words, to take our place—the righteous for the unrighteous.
- By taking our spiritual death and giving us His spiritual life (His "righteousness") He is able to bring us to God, to give us eternal life with God.

5. In heaven. Pretty exciting!

6. Because of His great love.

7. By GRACE—undeserved kindness.

One simple way to explain grace is in the form of a scenario:

You're playing with a tennis ball near a really expensive old window. Your headteacher asks you not to play with the ball near it as it might get smashed and then he will punish you by giving you a detention. You ignore him and sure enough the window is smashed. Three ways in which the head can react:

- *Judgment*: Punishing you by giving you a detention—giving you what you deserve and what he had warned you would happen.
- *Mercy*: Not giving you what you deserve. Letting you off the detention.
- *Grace*: Giving you something you don't deserve. Letting you off the detention and allowing you to have his three-course lunch. That is undeserved kindness.

Of course, God does judge our wrongdoing; He judges it in Christ instead of us (1 Peter 3 v 18). But this analogy, imperfect though it is, helps us understand what it means for God to give us grace.

8. Not by ourselves, and not by our works—in other words, not by anything we are or anything that we do.

Extra: Why does this mean “no-one can boast”? Because me being saved and having eternal life isn't anything to do with me. I can't pat myself on the back—I can only praise God. He sent Jesus to make me alive, and He gave me faith to believe in Jesus (v 8). God gets all the praise, and I don't do any boasting!

9. “Gift”.

a. No. It's given to you. If you had to earn it, it wouldn't be a present; it'd be your wages!

b. Because they like you, or love you, and want you to know that.

c. Take it! That's all. (Though it's good to say thank you!)

To illustrate this, you could give the teenager a wrapped-up bar of chocolate with a tag saying: “For [their name], with love from [your name]”

Ask whether they've earned it. Ask what the tag says about why you're giving it. Ask what they have to do to make the gift you're offering their own.

10. God gives His gift of eternal life on the basis of His love and mercy, to people who don't deserve it. So God's gift is given *despite* what we have done, not *because of* what we have done.

BOXED QUESTIONS

Depending on where you think your teenager is spiritually, choose one box or the other. Use the right-hand box if you're not sure he's a Christian. Use the left-hand one if you are confident he is.

- *Right-hand box:* Encourage the teenager to read each sentence, and work out his answers in his own mind. Then ask him if there's anything he wants to ask you about or talk to you about. You might want to ask him where he thinks he is heading beyond his death—equally you might judge that now is not the best time.
- *Left-hand box:* The idea here is to help the teenager see how God's grace gives us total assurance that we're going to heaven, because it's about what He's done for us through Jesus, not what we do. It'll also help you check they've understood grace!

11. "Do good works". We don't live God's way (ie: do good) *to be* saved, but *because we are* saved. It's exciting because God's prepared these for us to do. He's given us jobs to do for Him!

12-14: These are simply recapping the main thrust of the passage. You can spend longer or shorter amounts of time as you think best for your particular teenager.

PRAYER TIME:

Two-sentence prayers this time!

Again, encourage each other to learn the memory verse—and see if you can remember last week's!