

Savoring God's Word

A Meditation on Ephesians 2:4-10

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This meditation exercise about your deeply desiring to let God change you is especially for those concerned with making progress in the spiritual life.

If you wish to have a group meditate on the passage together, the instructions for the group leader are in italics. If you wish to use it alone, ignore those instructions. This meditation roughly follows the pattern of *lectio divina*, but also includes elements from the Ignatian style of Scripture meditation. For more information about how to meditate on Scripture, see [Savoring God's Word](#) or the recording [Meditating on Scripture](#) (scroll to bottom of page).

WARMING UP (5-10 minutes)

Center yourself by breathing in and out several times. Relax your legs and arms. Bend your neck back and forth. Let go of distracting thoughts and if necessary, jot them down to turn them over to God. Then ask yourself the following question to help focus your thoughts for the meditation. **In what ways has God worked within you recently?**

Close your eyes and take a few minutes to quietly consider the places you've gone and the people you've talked with in the last week. If nothing comes to you, try simply to enjoy God's presence.

Group leader: After group members have had a chance to greet each other, read the centering instructions above. Then present the above "quiet question" and let them reflect quietly for a few minutes. Repeat the question and ask them to share their thoughts in a sentence or two. Anyone who wishes to pass may do so.

READING the PASSAGE (15-20 minutes)

Read the passage below silently, noting the explanations in the right column.

Group leader: Ask a group member to read the passage below aloud. Suggest that other group members might want to close their eyes and listen.

EPHESIANS 2: 4-10

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 *made us alive* with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by *grace* you have been saved.

OUR FUTURE

6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the

ITALICIZED
WORDS &
PHRASES

MADE US ALIVE
Awakening from
spiritual death. It
changes our

heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his *grace*, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

spiritual status and how we respond to God.

HOW THIS AWAKENING WORKS

8 For it is by *grace* you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

GRACE God's choice to love us when we have done nothing to deserve it.

If you haven't read the notes in the right column, read them silently now. Take a minute to consider the following questions.

Group leader: After the passage is read, ask group members to read silently the explanations in the right column and then to jot down answers to the questions below. After a few minutes, have them choose one question and share their answer to that question in a sentence or two. Or they may pass, if they wish. Explain that this is not a time for discussion, but for reporting responses to the questions.

AFTERLIFE PHRASES

1. This passage is full of lofty, mysterious phrases that humans would be presumptuous to think they understand. Sure, we can give definitions to certain words, but to say we grasp and understand them is probably not true. Still, we have the capacity to enjoy that which is above our heads.

Look at the phrases below. Which, if any, make you think, *I'm not sure what it means, but I like the sound of it.*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> God . . . his great love for us | <input type="checkbox"/> incomparable riches of his grace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God . . . rich in mercy | <input type="checkbox"/> his kindness to us in Christ Jesus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> raised us up with Christ | <input type="checkbox"/> faith---. . . a gift of God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus | |

All these phrases have something to do with how God makes us spiritually alive.

PURPOSE PHRASES

2. Look at this verse below and underline one or two words that draw your attention.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (vs. 10).

3. Do the words you underlined fit with what you think God has been doing in your life? If so, how?

GRACE

4. The word, "grace," appears three times in this passage (vs. 5, 7, 8) and the phrase, "by grace you have been saved" appears twice (vs. 5, 8). God's grace is interwoven throughout our lives, if we have the eyes to see it. How do you sense God's grace present in your life?

- when I make mistakes
- in my desires to serve
- not holding grudges against people
- responsible for the good that comes about in our lives
- other: _____

CHRIST

5. The word that appears most frequently in this passage is "Christ" (vs. 5, 6, 6, 7). Being made alive -- having a spiritual awakening -- is about Christ. Ponder for a moment the simplicity of that.

PICTURING the PASSAGE (10-15 minutes)

If you were to draw a picture of this passage (do that, if you wish), you might draw Christ handing out gifts. Those gifts might include spiritual awakening, God's great love, God's rich mercy, his kindness, faith, being raised up with Christ, being seated with him in the heavenly realms, being his workmanship.

For example, if you have struggled with a certain sin, you might find yourself picturing a gift of "incomparable riches of his grace." Or if you have watched a friend die and now fear your own death, you might ponder a gift of being "seated with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus."

Read the passage again -- aloud this time -- and close your eyes, picturing Christ giving you one or two of these gifts. If you wish, hold out your hands, palms upward, as a symbolic gesture of receiving that gift.

Group leader: Have group members read the above information silently. Then ask one person to read the passage aloud as other group members picture Christ giving them gifts as described above.

SOAKING in the PASSAGE (5-15 minutes)

Read the passage aloud again and ponder the following question for a few minutes: **What word or image from the passage touches your life today?** Write that word or image below.

Group leader: Have a different group member read the passage aloud and then state the question printed in bold. Ask them to write their responses when they're ready. After several minutes of silence, ask each group member to read what they've written.

PONDERING the INVITATION (5-15 minutes)

Perhaps God is offering you an invitation in this passage: **What do I sense this passage is calling me to do or asking me to receive from God?** What might that be? Sit quietly for a few minutes, pondering this question. If something comes to you right away, set that aside and see what else occurs to you. If nothing comes at all, rest in that. It may occur to you later today or this week.

Group leader: Read the above instructions aloud and after a few minutes, repeat the question printed in bold. Ask group members to respond by saying, I SENSE THIS PASSAGE CALLING ME TO: and then completing that statement with a short phrase. Anyone who wishes to pass may do so.

PRAYING (5-10 minutes)

Respond to God by telling him how you feel about what you sensed or didn't sense during this meditation. If you need to present questions to God, do so.

Group leader: After allowing a few minutes for private prayer, ask group members to also pray silently for the group as a whole in their desire to love God.

DAILY LECTIO:

If you wish, use the above format to meditate on God's word between group meetings. You may wish to focus on today's passage everyday this week or use the following passages:

- John 1:14-17 (the Word dwelling with us in the fullness of His grace)
- Hebrews 4:14-16 (approaching God's throne of grace)
- 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (how we'll be clothed with immortality)
- 2 Corinthians 9:7-15 (how God gives us gifts and helps us serve)
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (how God's grace helps us)
- Ephesians 1:17-23 (God's gift of the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints)

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