

G R O W

Get focused, Read, Observation, Worship

The Gift of Grace – Ephesians 2:8-9

What's the best gift you ever received for birthday or Christmas? I was pretty excited to unwrap a Nintendo Entertainment System in 1985, and I still have that NES and I will never get rid of it, lol. So, would it still be a gift if you had to do something to get it? Let's say a parent makes a deal with a child that if they pass a big test they get a new toy; is that a gift? These are some things to consider as we look at the gift of God's grace in Ephesians 2:8-9.

GET FOCUSED

What distracts you from focusing on God and studying the Bible? Take a few moments and silence those distractions and focus your mind. Every time we go to the scriptures, let's expect to hear from God.

READ

Have you ever tried reading a verse from multiple translations? When we study God's Word, our reading should include using a literal translation, like ESV/NASB/NKJV, but other translation's word choices and phrasing can help us understand what's being said.

OBSERVATION (COMB through the text)

In addition to reading our main passage, read the verses around it to understand the **context**. Ephesians 2 focuses on the reality of sin for every person and the consequence of sin, but it also focuses on God's Gracious gift to offer salvation from sin to every person. Now, let's **observe** the key words and phrases in verses 8-9: Grace, Saved, Faith, Gift, God, Works, Boast.

To help understand the **meaning** of these words and phrases, invest in a good study Bible or utilize online tools like netbible.org. "Grace" is unmerited favor or kindness, meaning it's undeserved. God doesn't owe us anything and we haven't done anything to deserve His kindness and favor. Rather, we have done plenty to be undeserving. Remember Romans 5:12 teaches us that all have sinned, and death has spread to all because of sin. "Saved" means to be rescued from danger or destruction. Sin has brought death, so we need to be saved from the penalty of sin. Look back at Ephesians 2:3-5; we all are by nature are children of wrath because we all rebel against God. BUT God is rich in mercy and grace and has made a way for us to be saved. "Faith" is the conviction of truth; it is belief and trust in

something. Faith has the same root word as believe, like we see in John 3:16. We understand then, that believe and faith are not just intellectual, knowing something to be true, but actually trusting and living in the truth, like we see in Proverbs 3:5-6. Imagine having to lean on something for support, without it you will fall and fail. We are not to lean on our own understanding, but we are too lean on God's truth in everything, leaning in with all our weight. "Gift" is a present given to another. And it is contrasted with "works," which is laboring to accomplish or earn something. We cannot work for salvation; we cannot do enough to overcome the debt of our sin. So God has given us the gift of salvation. This gift is a result of grace because we didn't deserve it. Yes, we do have to exercise faith, but this is not a work that we can boast in. This is because God paid the price, so it's a gift. Remember Romans 6:23, "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Our sin has earned death, but God is gracious and makes this gift of eternal life possible. But it's only for those in Christ Jesus our Lord, so we must realize we need a Savior (Christ) and we must submit our lives to Him (Lord).

So, what's the **bottom-line**, how would you sum all this up? Ephesians 2:8-9 teach us that salvation is a gift of God's grace.

WORSHIP

Remember, "reading the Bible is not where your engagement ends It is where it begins" (Heiser). How will we live this out? Let us consider Galatians 6:14, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Let us glory in Christ and Grace. Think about how you celebrate other things: hobbies, people, celebrities. How can we celebrate God's grace? One way is to fully participate in worship, both personal and corporate. What music do you listen to? There's plenty of good music in the world, but do we listen to music that helps us celebrate God's Grace? Also, let us live differently, this is what being crucified to the world means. We must order our lives around heavenly values, not earthly ways. So, continue to meditate on this passage and how to live it out.