



“NOTHING MORE”

Ephesians 2 Small Group Plan

**“You, my brother,
are not a servant any longer;
you are a son.”**

— Galatians 4:7 (JB Phillips)

Author David Seamands illustrates how fear and uncertainty have kept some Christians from fully realizing God’s amazing grace. He imagines a domestic home and contrasts the “servant” of the household with the “son.”

When Devadas came next to see me, he was visibly excited. “Until Sunday I never realized that I have been literally living up to my name — ‘servant of God.’ I have been thinking and feeling and living not like a family member should, but like a servant does.” Since everyone in India clearly understands the difference between the two, I said to him, “Devadas, let’s do some role playing. You be the servant in the family, and I’ll be the son. Let’s live out a day in their lives, from morning to bedtime, and see what the differences are.” He agreed. Before long we were really into it, putting into words the wide difference between our roles.

The servant is accepted and appreciated on the basis of what he does, the child on the basis of who he is.

The servant starts the day anxious and worried, wondering if his work will really please his master. The child rests in the secure love of his family.

The servant is accepted because of his workmanship, the son or daughter because of a relationship.

The servant is accepted because of his productivity and performance. The child belongs because of his position as a person.

At the end of the day, the servant has peace of mind only if he is sure he has proven his worth by his work. The next morning his anxiety begins again. The child can be secure all day and know that tomorrow won’t change his status.

When a servant fails, his whole position is at stake; he might lose his job. When a child fails, he will be grieved because he has hurt his parents, and he will be corrected and disciplined. But he is not afraid of being thrown out. His basic confidence is in belonging and being loved, and his performance does not change the stability of his position.

From *Healing Grace*, pgs. 22-23

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What did you learn from the “servant” “son” role-playing analogy?
- Where do fear and uncertainty get their power?
- Where do children first begin to learn about confidence?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— SIN’S WORK AGAINST US —

Ephesians 2:1-3

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

- What do each of these phrases mean: “dead in your transgressions” “followed the ways of the world” “disobedient” “gratifying the cravings” “objects of wrath”?
- How do they make you feel?
- Do you want to be around a person who fits this description? Explain.
- Is it difficult for you to picture yourself as this person? Explain.

— GOD’S LOVE FOR US —

Ephesians 2:4a

^{4a} But because of his great love for us.

- Why did God choose to be with such people?
- What is the most powerful expression or definition of God’s love that you know?
- Why does love overcome failure? How does love overcome failure?

— GOD’S GRACE IN US —

Ephesians 2:4b-5

^{4b} 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.

- Define “rich in mercy.”
- How can “mercy” bring “life” to a “dead” spirit/soul/heart?

— GOD’S HONOR ON US —

Ephesians 2:6-7

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

- How does God’s work in a “failed” life speak to a “failed” world?
- How does “expressed ... kindness” define or illustrate grace?

— **GOD’S HUMILITY WITHIN US** —

Ephesians 2:8-9

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.

- What are the dangers of being God’s “Billboard” of grace?
- How does religious “boasting” take place today?

— **GOD’S TRANSFORMATION BEFORE US** —

Ephesians 2:10

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

- Why are some willing to accept God’s grace, but not His transformation?
- How can the power and joy of grace be a tool in God’s hand to shape and mold our character and our actions?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- When did you first begin to understand God’s grace?
- Who or what helped you to grasp it’s meaning?
- Which is most difficult for you to accept, God’s grace or His transformation?
- How do you balance Paul’s warning that we are saved by grace and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9) and James’ warning that faith without works is dead (James 2:26)?
- Close by thanking God for His amazing grace.