

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
PROGRAM 19 (#912199)
WEEK 4 (912344)
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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare**

TITLE: Program 19 – We Are God’s Workmanship

THURSDAY

OPEN

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.” That is a hymn written by John Newton that for generations has been sung over and over again. It’s a hymn that we love. But I want to ask you a question: Does that grace allow you to plop down and say, “Okay, I’m saved by grace, I’m going to Heaven someday, see you around town God”? O no, Beloved, it doesn’t.

PART ONE

I want to begin our program today, Precious One, by telling you a story. When I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ one of the things that I began to do besides read the Bible was read biographies of great Christians. Someone handed me a novel. It was called “A Servant of Slaves” and it was the story of John Newton. John Newton is the one that wrote “Amazing Grace”,

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“...how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I’m found, was blind, but now I see.” John Newton was raised at the knee of his mother. He was taught the Word of God and she prayed for him fervently. But his mother died and John Newton turned his back on everything that he had been taught about God and he sunk into the depths of sin. He became a slave trader. And like the other slave traders he would go down in the hold of the ship and he would get one of those slaves and use that slave for his own purposes. Well what happened to John Newton was he eventually saw how wretched he was and he came to know Jesus Christ. And he was literally amazed by the grace of God. But one day after he had been saved he was overcome with lust and instead of walking by the Spirit he in the lust of his mind went down into the hold of the ship and got a woman. And he started to use that woman for his own purposes for his own sexual desires and guilt washed over him. He felt so bad and he knew that he had grieved the grace of God. So many times we think that grace is an excuse for sin. Grace is not an excuse for sin, Beloved. Grace is the power to overcome sin. That was the last time that John Newton did something like that. I tell that story at the beginning of my book on “Lord, I Need Grace, I Need It Today”. And so I tell it in that book, the grace of God that is sufficient for all of life. Well we want to look at that grace because as I said before, the grace of God does not simply permit you to sit down and to do nothing. I mean to say okay, I’m saved by grace. Isn’t that wonderful! It’s unmerited unearned favor. God has given it to me. I’m just going to sit back and take life easy and I’m going to do whatever I want to do. And if I sin it’s okay because “...where sin [abounds], grace [does] **much more abound.**” (Romans 5:20, KJV) That Bible says that doesn’t it. Yes, the Bible does say that, but the Bible does not say that you can continue in live in sin. I want us to return to Ephesians chapter 2 and I want us to pick at that wonderful verse that so many people have memorized. The problem is they memorize Ephesians 2:8 & 9 and they forget verse 10. And verse 10 is the key to

understand the ongoing responsibility and power of the grace that has been bestowed upon you. So let’s look at it, Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8 says **“For by grace you have been saved...”** saved from your sins, saved from the power of sin, saved from the kingdom of darkness, saved from slavery to sin. He says **“For by grace you have been saved through faith...”**(Ephesians 2:8a) and we saw that God pours out His grace and then there’s like a pipe that attaches to the grace of God and comes down and pours out that grace on us. And that pipe that connects us with the grace of God is faith. But even the faith is from God, even the faith is a gift of God. And it says this, it says **“For by grace have you been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it...,”** the faith, **“...is [a] gift of God; not as a result of works....”** (Ephesians 2:8-9a) It does not come because you earned. It does not come because you merited it. It is not a result of working of earning of meriting or deserving. It says **“...it is a gift of God.”** (2:8b) And it means the word “gift” is a gift that is freely totally absolutely bestowed upon you apart from any qualifications on your part. And it says, **“For...,”** and this is the verse that we forget, **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus....”** (Ephesians 2:10a) Now once again there’s the “in Christ” that we have been marking. Remember at the beginning of this course when we started studying Ephesians and we showed you that you need to mark key repeated words, remember when you downloaded your study guide, and I pray that you’re still using that study guide because there is a lesson for you to do. There is a lesson that you can do day by day because the whole purpose of Precepts for Life, this program is to help you discover truth for yourself so that you can live in discernment, so that you can discern truth from error and so that you can walk in the light of the Word of God and know that abundant life that Jesus came to give you and that you might have. So we’re marking “in Christ Jesus”. We’re putting a red cloud around it and then you’re coloring it whatever color you want to. I colored mine on the inside in yellow. **“For we are His workmanship...,”**

God’s workmanship. He’s the One who, “...**created [us] in Christ Jesus...**,” Now this is absolutely key, unto or, “...**for good works which God prepared...**,” now watch “...**beforehand so that we [should] walk in them.**” (Ephesians 2:10) Before and I want you to go back in your minds eye. I want you to go back to what I taught in Ephesians chapter 1. God chose us in Christ and remember that half moon, which indicates the beginning of creation, the creation of the heavens and the earth. And before God ever created the heavens and the earth [God chose you in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 1:4) Well what he’s saying is that in God’s omniscience, in God’s sovereignty God knew when you would be born because He put the sperm and the egg together. God knew when you would be born again, when you would believe in Jesus Christ, when you would be united with Christ in His death, in His Spirit and in His resurrection and walking, being raised to walk in newness of life. God knew when that would happen and so God also knew what He wanted to do with you. You’re going to see it later. God gave you special gifts. God, when He saved you placed you in His spot in the body of Jesus Christ because you, “...**are His workmanship, created in Christ...unto good works [that] God has...ordained [for you to] walk in....**” (Ephesians 2:10, KJV) So I want you to see God has an awesome plan and purpose for your life. And what you need to know is if it is a purpose driven life, it is a purpose that is driven by God so that you in turn might fulfill His good pleasure. So God created you where? In Christ Jesus unto good works that God has before planned for you to walk in. Now what is one of the ways that you know that you are really saved? You don’t know that you are really saved if you just say I believe in the grace of God, because the grace of God, listen, is not something that allows you to sin. And I want you to get this in your head, Precious One. The grace of God is not something that gives you permission to sin, rather it gives you power not to sin. Let me show this to you by taking you to an experience of the author himself. I want to take you

to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Now as we study together you are going to begin to recognize that certain chapters are about certain topics. And 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is the gospel chapter. It’s all about the gospel. It’s about the death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And what God has done in giving you eternal life and how He is going to redeem this purchased possession and how someday this mortal’s going to put on immortality. So it’s the gospel chapter. It’s the resurrection chapter because the gospel has to do with the resurrection and it is all about the resurrections. It’s about Christ’s resurrection. It’s about the resurrection of the church in general. It’s awesome. I’m not going to go into it or I’ll get stuck in it and we won’t get to our topic. So 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 10 and he’s telling about how Christ died according to the Scriptures. He was buried according to the Scriptures. He was raised according to the Scriptures and how He was seen by many. And He was seen by over 500 at one time. There’s much evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And then he says and He was seen last of all by me. And this is what he says, **“And last of all...,”** verse 8, **“...to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.”** (1 **Corinthians 15:8**) He didn’t get to be part of one of the twelve that hung around with Jesus. He was just growing as a Pharisee and he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews and he was strict to the traditions of the Law. But he wasn’t saved; he wasn’t born into God’s family. And this is what he says **“For I am the least of [these] apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But....”** (1 **Corinthians 15:9-10a**) What does the **“but”** have to say? It’s key. We’ll look at it when we come back.

PART TWO

I’m glad you’re back, my friend. I’m glad that we’re studying the Word of God together. You don’t know what it means to me to have the privilege of sharing God’s precious truths with you. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for communicating with me. I love hearing from you and I love

hearing what God is doing in your life and it's such an encouragement. So thank you for your encouragement. Thank you for your gifts. That's all that enables us to do what we are doing through this wonderful medium of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ so that people might be rooted and grounded and established in the Word of God. Well if you've got your colored pencils and you've got your Bible opened to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 where I left you before that announcement I want you to look at verse 10, because what we need to do is mark the word "grace". Remember I told you that this is a very important word. It's a key word because the Law came by Moses, but grace and truth were realized in Jesus Christ. The grace of God has always been, but all of a sudden we realized it. We experienced it. We saw it. We felt its impact through Jesus Christ and the summing up of all things in Christ in the fullness of time when God sent forth His Son. So we want to mark "grace". And I don't know how you're marking it, but I color it blue and then I put a yellow border around it. But watch what he says about the grace of God in verse 10 of 1 Corinthians 15. Now you can always remember Ephesians 2:10 talks about the grace of God that leads us to be **"...His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works [that] God has [ah planned] beforehand...."** (Ephesians 2:10a, KJV & NASB mix) for you and me to do. Now in verse 10 it says, **"But by the grace of God..."**, so you want to mark "grace" there. **"By the grace of God I am what I am..."**, He says **"...and His grace..."**, you want to mark it again, **"...toward me did not prove vain...."** (1 Corinthians 15:10a) In other words it wasn't useless. It wasn't given to me and it was worthless. He says, **"...but I labored ... more than all of them..."**, more than all the apostles. He says, **"...yet not I, but the grace of God [in] me."** (1 Corinthians 15:10b) Three times he uses the grace of God. He uses the grace of God because he wants you to get that word in your mind. He wants you to understand it. He wants you to understand that it is unearned. It is unmerited favor. Grace is everything that Jesus Christ is and everything that

He has made available to you and to me as a free gift. **“For by grace are you saved through faith; and that...,”** that faith is **“...not of yourselves, it is [a] gift of God: not of works lest any [one] should boast.”** (Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV) I want you to remember where those verses are. And that’s why when you open the Bible, actually open the Bible. You need to do this in church. If they’re putting it on the Power Point that’s okay. I mean nothing against the Power Point, but you need to be looking in your Bible because this Bible is your textbook for life so you need to mark it. So what is he saying? He’s saying by the grace of God I am what I am. Everything that I have, everything that I am it’s not me. It’s God’s grace. It’s God’s unmerited favor. It is everything that God has supplied me in Christ. He says **“By the grace of God I am what I am, and...,”** now listen carefully, **“...His grace toward me did not prove vain....”** (1 Corinthians 15:10a) Now if you get saved and you sit down and you say praise God I’m going to heaven and I am so thankful. I am so thankful that God saved me. And then you sit there and you become a spiritual couch potato. I mean, and you just sit there and and you sit and you sit and you sit but praise God every time a testimony is given, praise God I know when I die I am going to go to heaven, hallelujah, glory. O no, Beloved. It’s the grace of God that enables you to be. It is the grace of God that enables you to perform. He says, [“...His grace was not poured out on me in vain; but I labored more than them all, and yet not I. It wasn’t me that was doing the labor. It wasn’t me that was doing the work of the ministry, but it was the grace of God in me.”] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 15:10) Grace, now remember that it’s appropriated by faith and it’s that’s grace of God that has been poured out in me and I use that grace. I did not quench that grace. I did not just let it set dormant, but I used it. Now I want to ask you a question. Is the grace of God sitting dormant in you or are you laboring? Is the grace of God poured out on you in vain or are you laboring more than them all? Listen, you are not your own. You were bought, Precious One, with a price and you are to glorify God in your body

and in your spirit which is God’s. So God has a task for you. You, as we saw in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 10 are [“His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus,”] now listen carefully, [“unto good deeds which God beforehand marked out for you to walk in.”] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 2:10) So grace is power that enables us to perform the work of God and to accomplish the will of God. What I want us to do is I want us to go to Titus and it’s in the back of the Bible. And all the T’s come together in the New Testament, so it’s Thessalonians, then it’s Timothy, then it’s Titus. The longest ones are first. And when you get to Titus I want you to see the importance of good deeds. Now as he’s writing this epistle, as Paul is writing to his son Titus, another son in the gospel he’s telling them that **“...there are many rebellious men...,”** They’re **“...empty talkers and...,”** they’re **“...deceivers....”** (Titus 1:10a) And he says they **“...must be silenced because they are upsetting whole [households].”** (1:11a) It says **“One of [them] themselves, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are always liars...,’”** They are **“...evil beasts...,”** and they are **“...lazy gluttons.”** (1:12) He says **“This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely... that they may be sound in the faith.”** (1:13) And he goes on to say in verse 16, **“They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”** (1:16) Now I want to stop and let’s do some inspection. Do your deeds deny God or do they support the grace of God? You come over to Titus chapter 3 and this is what he says in verse 5. **“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration [the] renewing [of] the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out...on us richly through...Christ our Savior.”** (Titus 3:5-6) And then he says **“This is a trustworthy statement ... concerning these things I want ... to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God [may] be careful to engage in good deeds....”** (Titus 3:8a) You are His workmanship. It’s amazing grace, how sweet the

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sound that saved you. Yes, but it doesn't leave you dormant. It gives you power to perform the work of God. So, Beloved, could you say with Paul that His grace that was poured out on you was not poured out in vain, but you labor more than them all, yet not you, but the grace of God in you?