

MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE 7

GOD RAISES THE DEAD TO LIFE

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM IN CHRIST
SERIES: GOD IS HOLY—I AM A SINNER/SAINT

BIG TRUTH: GOD RAISES THE DEAD TO LIFE

John 5:21; Romans 6:4; 8:11; Colossians 2:12-13; John 14:19; Revelation 20:4

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 2:4-5

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved”

BIG IDEAS

- Sin makes us dead.
- Jesus died in our place knowing who we are at our worst.
- God’s mercy and grace toward us are on display through the cross.

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 2:1-10

TRANSFORM - I AM IN CHRIST

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a “new creation” in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God is holy and we are separated from Him in our sin.
- The gospel transforms sinners into saints.
- The Christian life is about becoming who we already are in Christ.



Every student should feel...

- The depth of their sin against the holy God.
- Wonder and awe at the good news of the gospel.
- Secure in the identity that they now have in Jesus.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of Ephesians
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week during the Ephesians series.
- Learn how to use a commentary.



Every student should want to...

- Be transformed by the gospel.
- Put sin to death and pursue holiness.
- Share the good news of the gospel.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 2:4-5

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We are all dead in our sin.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses...”

- Jeremiah 17:9 reveals the utterly hopeless condition of our hearts when it says the heart is desperately sick. When we are born, we are born sinners separated from God. God is a holy and righteous God and our sin causes a great chasm between God and us. Because of the truth of Jeremiah 17:9, there is nothing we can do to overcome our sin. There is no way we can make ourselves better or even good enough to reconcile ourselves to God.
- We are all created in God’s image, yet sin has distorted that image and left us in need of a Savior. Our sin leads us away from God, and we cannot naturally seek Him or desire to please Him. Because life is from God, and true spiritual life is only found in Him, our sin makes us dead.

God is rich in mercy and love.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us,”

- We are hopeless in our sinful state. As Paul describes in Ephesians 2:1-3, we follow the world, Satan, and our own sinful desires. We are children of wrath because we rebel against God and choose to fulfill our own desires instead of obeying His Word. In verse 4, Paul reminds us of the only hope we have---God. God chose to rescue us while we were still living in our sinful state. If it were not for God, we would remain hopeless and lost. Yet God showed us mercy and grace by making a way for us to be made alive spiritually through His Son, Jesus.
- God chose to show us mercy and grace because of His perfect love. Mankind did nothing to deserve the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. We can do nothing to earn our salvation and redemption. God is rich in mercy and love towards mankind. He showered us with love and mercy even though our sinful hearts lead us to rebel against and reject Him.

Through Christ, God gives us life.

“made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved,”

- We do not have to remain dead in our sin. God made a way for us to be reconciled to Him through Jesus. Jesus’ life on earth, His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead gives us new life when we confess our sins and believe in Him. When we have saving faith, we receive spiritual life. We are no longer dead in our sin.

BIG IDEA #1: SIN MAKES US DEAD.¹**[THIS]**

Ephesians 2:1-3 is a description of man's condition without Christ. We are born hopeless because our inherited sin natures lead us to rebel against God. Though we are not directly held accountable for the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden, we inherit a sin nature from them. This means that we all disobey God's commands. We are controlled by the passions of our flesh and carry out our desires. This sinful condition makes us spiritually dead because our sin separates us from God and life is found in God. We cannot truly live apart from God and we cannot know God without knowing Christ.

[THEREFORE]

What behaviors, thoughts, or attitudes have revealed your own slavery to sin before knowing Christ?

Galatians 5:19-21 gives us a list of worldly behaviors and attitudes that are true of our sin natures. We do these things because we are enslaved by our sin. Our hearts are wicked and deceive us into believing that these things fulfill us. 2 Corinthians 4:4 reminds us that the god of this world blinds us to the truth and our sin natures lead us to follow Satan instead of God.

In what ways does our sin make us spiritually dead?

In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul reminds us that we are all spiritually dead. Our deadness causes us to not be able to understand the things of God as seen in 1 Corinthians 2:14. Our natural minds cannot submit to the things of God as Paul writes in Romans 8. Jesus teaches us in John 6:44 that we are powerless to even come to God of our own choosing. In John 15:5, Jesus again reminds us of our powerlessness. Without God, we can do nothing that pleases Him or even brings us closer to Him.

[THIS]

In Ephesians 2:3, Paul teaches that we are by nature children of wrath. Wrath is God's holy anger towards sin. We are born under God's wrath. God is holy and just and He requires restitution for breaking His commands. He is a God of love and a God of wrath. His wrath is right and just because He is perfect and holy. Every person is born deserving God's wrath to be poured out upon them. In Romans 1:18-25, Paul explains that God has revealed Himself in creation; therefore, no person stands before God in innocence. Instead, we are all deserving of the punishment that our sin requires—death and eternal separation from God.

[THEREFORE]

How does God's holiness help you understand the wrath that you deserve without Christ?

1 Samuel 2:2 proclaims the truth that there is none holy like God. This truth reveals man's unrighteous and hopeless state. 1 Peter 1:16 teaches that man is commanded to be holy because God is holy. Yet, man is unable to make himself holy. In our sin, we are all deserving of God's wrath. John 3:36 teaches us that those without Christ will receive the wrath of God.

1. Ephesians 2:1: Paul opens chapter two with the declaration of man's condition. We are spiritually dead because of our sin. We have no hope without a saving faith in Jesus.

GOD RAISES THE DEAD TO LIFE

BIG IDEA #2: JESUS DIED IN OUR PLACE KNOWING WHO WE ARE AT OUR WORST.²**[THIS]**

Paul's description of man's sinfulness in Ephesians 2:1-3 is known as total depravity. Total depravity means that we are all completely sinful people. Though we are all made in the image of God, that image is distorted by our sinfulness. We are not just bad people, we are completely sinful. Even the good things we may do as sinners are done for our glory and not for God's glory making them unrighteous acts. Isaiah 64:6 shows us that our good deeds are like filthy garments---they are not truly good because unrighteous people cannot make themselves righteous. Romans 3:10 reminds us that every person is sinful because no one is born righteous. We are incapable of being good enough and doing right things in God's eyes in order to save ourselves. We all owe a debt to a holy and righteous God.

[THEREFORE]

How does the world around you reveal the total depravity of mankind?

Ephesians 2:3 speaks to the complete sinfulness of every person. We all carry out the passions of our flesh; we all are by our very natures children of wrath and sons of disobedience. Psalm 58:3 reminds us of the completeness of our sin in that we are all conceived with a sin nature. Romans 8:7 teaches us that the mind set on the flesh does not please God; in fact, it is hostile to God. 2 Peter 3:3-4 speaks to the depravity evident in the world when Peter writes about the peoples' condition.

Are we good people who sometimes do bad things, or are we broken people who sometimes do good things?

We are all born with a sin nature just as David writes in Psalm 51:5 of himself. Galatians 5:19-21 teaches us what the works of our flesh are and we exhibit these works prior to knowing Christ. For those who know Christ, we fight against the works of the flesh, as we see in James 4:1-4. We are all born separated from God and are all in need of salvation from God.

[THIS]

Our condition at birth is hopeless because we cannot save ourselves. God did not leave man in this hopeless condition. He provided the sacrifice required to pay our sin debt when He sent Jesus to die the death we deserve to die. Ephesians 2:5-6 shows us that Christ died for us even though we were in rebellion against Him. Jesus came to earth, took on flesh and lived the perfect life that we could not live. He died on the cross for the sins that we commit. He did this while we were still sinners. We can do nothing to earn our salvation because we are enslaved to our sin nature. Even in our total depravity, God saved us through His Son, Jesus.

[THEREFORE]

How does the truth that Jesus died for us while we were at our worst lead you to worship Him?

1 Peter 1:3-5 is a praise to God for His mercy and grace that offer us salvation even though we do not deserve it. Colossians 3:1-4 reminds us of the work that God has done and the result is a heart of praise. We do not deserve God's salvation, yet He offers it to us willingly.

2. Ephesians 2:5: Even while we were dead, God died for us and paid our sin debt.

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE TOWARD US ARE ON DISPLAY THROUGH THE CROSS.³**[THIS]**

Ephesians 2:5-6 teaches us that through Christ, God raises dead sinners to new life. We are all born dead in our sin because we cannot please God, and God is life. Jesus died on the cross that we might live through Him. We are not saved through our own works, but through the work of Christ on the cross. God shows grace to us because we do not deserve an offer of salvation. God's mercy is evident in that He doesn't make us pay the sin debt we all owe. Instead, Jesus died on the cross in our place and fulfilled the sin debt we owed.

[THEREFORE]**How does God's mercy give us freedom from our sin?**

When James says to speak and act as one who is judged under the law of liberty in 2:12, he is speaking of the freedom from sin that saving faith gives us. Galatians 5:1 speaks to the freedom we gain from God's mercy and grace through Jesus. Jesus took the wrath that we all deserve. We are all born slaves to our sin nature, but through Christ, God sets us free.

How does God's grace change our standing before God?

Jesus' death on the cross changes our position with God. Ephesians 3:12 speaks to our position change when it describes the boldness and access believers have to God. Romans 5:2 teaches us of the hope we have and the access we enjoy through Jesus. John 1:12 reminds us that we are no longer enemies of God, but part of His family.

[THIS]

Ephesians 2:8-9 is a statement on man's helplessness and God's grace in the midst of this helplessness. We do not deserve to be saved because we are children of wrath, living according to our sinful passions and worldly desires, but God stepped in and showed us grace. God chose to not give us what we deserve when He sent Jesus to the cross in our place. He chose instead to give us mercy by allowing us freedom and new life through Christ when we were enslaved to our sin. Titus 3:5 reveals that God's mercy and grace are responsible for the salvation of man and this mercy and grace are evident on the cross.

[THEREFORE]**How does saving faith in Christ raise us from death to life?**

In Ephesians 2:5 shows us that God's grace saves us from the spiritual death that we are born into. Just as God raised Jesus from the dead after His crucifixion, He raises our dead hearts to new life when we have saving faith in Christ. Galatians 2:20 teaches us that the life we live now is lived through faith in Christ. Romans 5:20-21 shows us that the new life we receive is eternal life with Christ.

How does God's grace toward us lead you to a deeper love for Him?

Romans 3:20 shows us that we cannot save ourselves. We are in need of a Savior. Romans 9:16 reminds us that our salvation is not because of anything we do, but based upon God's mercy. 1 John 4:19 shows us that we love because God loved us first and sent His Son for us. When we experience His grace, we love God because we are set free to love Him.

3. Ephesians 2:7-10: God has shown mercy and grace through the cross that we might obey Him and reveal this mercy and grace to the world.