

## Ephesians 2:8-9 in the Bible

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

## Two key words in this verse

- **GRACE:** God wants to change your life. He wants to begin repairing your inner brokenness. *He offers you this new life as a gift of grace, not as something you can earn!* We are saved by grace and not by works.

There are many large groups that call themselves ‘Christian’, yet tell you that you need what Christ has done, *plus* your own works, to be saved from God’s judgment. You have to do their rituals, say their prayers, follow their rules. This is not what the Bible teaches. There are two ways that you can always recognise that a group is giving you the real Christian message:

1. The message is always about what God has said in the Bible, not what any human person (no matter their position) says, nor any other religious book, unless that person or book is simply teaching what is in the Bible.
  2. The message will always point to what Jesus Christ has DONE as being totally sufficient for your forgiveness and new relationship with God. Nothing you do can ever add to what is *already finished*—Jesus’ payment for your sins.
- **FAITH:** Remember from last week that faith is not ‘believing what you know isn’t true’, nor is it the absence of doubt or questions. Faith is a choice to trust. You come to a place of saying, *‘I’ve seen enough of the reality of God in the lives of people I know and I know that God is reaching out to me in my life right now. I’m ready to choose to trust in Jesus. He did everything necessary for my forgiveness when he died on the cross. So today I receive his free gift of grace.’*

## When you turn to Christ in faith

- God forgives you for the things in your life that have offended him.
- He adopts you into his family. Spiritually, God becomes your father and I become your brother.
- God’s Spirit begins the lifelong process of restoring the image of God in you.
- The reality of God in your life begins to have an impact on people around you. God starts introducing himself to other people through you.

## One choice can change the direction of your whole life

At the beginning of LifeWorks I made the statement that *‘There is a destination worth heading towards and a journey worth taking.’* I’ve taken you as far as I can on that journey. You can’t go any further towards God until you choose to trust him and what he’s done for you.

# Topic 9 – Turning towards Christ

You stand at a real crossroads in your life as you face this choice. This choice you face is so very significant because of two great life-principles of choices.



## 1. All choices have consequences

The Bible tells us *“a man reaps what he sows”*. It’s a law of life, just as sure as the scientific laws we count on.

Consequences are not only negative. This law works in both directions. Good choices have wonderful consequences that make our lives beautiful.

## 2. All choices lead to other choices

It’s as if each life choice you make creates spiritual momentum that makes it easier to make the next choice in that same direction—just like it’s easier for a moving train to keep rolling in the same direction.

The next choice will not only be easier, but often a bigger choice in that direction—until one day you find yourself spiritually, morally and relationally in a place that you would never have believed possible.

Maybe as you think about the place God has in your life, you feel like you have made a chain of choices that has created momentum in a way of life that leaves God out, and you can’t see how you could get off that train and onto the train heading towards God. But God, in his goodness, puts stations every now and then in your life where he brings your train to a stop and you see things clearly. He gives you the chance to change trains and get your life moving the other way.

LifeWorks is one of those stations. God has brought your train to a stop. He’s taken this focused time to show you what he’s done for you and he’s inviting you to take the gift he has paid for. It’s time to get off the train of fallenness and onto the train of restoration.

## Express in a prayer your choice to trust God (you don’t have to use my words):

God, the more I come to know about you, the more I realise how much I need you in my life. I freely admit that I have not measured up to your moral standard. I am unable to change myself and I don’t have the power to make things right between us. Thank you so much for loving me unconditionally. Thank you for Jesus’ death on the cross for me. Right now, I choose to trust you. I accept your gift of forgiveness. Please start the work of restoring your image in me. Thank you for welcoming me into your family. I look forward to building a great personal relationship with you. Amen.

## Discussion questions (pick some to discuss)

- How do you feel about the idea that your response to the Christian message is not just a response to a belief system, but rather it is your personal response to Jesus Christ?
- What do you think of this statement: ‘The Christian message is not about information but transformation’?
- Have you ever prayed to God before? How do you feel about talking to God?
- What is your personal response to LifeWorks and to Jesus Christ?