



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 3: Made for More

This week we are continuing our series “Made for More” as we tackle the next big question... How do I make an impact?

WEEKLY READING: Ephesians 2: 4-10

4 But because of his great love for us, 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. **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. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**9** not by works, so that no one can boast. **10** For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

MONDAY

In Ephesians Paul speaks about how we are made alive with Christ through His saving grace. He goes further to speak about the “incomparable riches of his grace”, and the kindness that God wants to express towards us through a life of following Jesus. Now, *that* is an amazing thing to be “made for”! God, in His grace, wants to fulfill His purpose and make an impact in this world through US! When we follow Him, we can make an impact on the world around us through the riches of His grace. How amazing!! However, we sometimes miss out on this because we think we know best. We follow ourselves or what others say around us, and *then* ask God to follow us. Ultimately, this leads to failure because we aren’t operating from His grace. **Are there areas where you are trying to make an impact on your own and then asking God to join in? What would it look like for you to turn that over to Him, and ask Him where He wants to use you? What if we choose to make an impact by following Jesus instead?**

Prayer: *Jesus, help me to see the areas in my life that I am actually following myself, instead of following you.*

TUESDAY

As we continue reading in Ephesians this week, in verse 8, Paul talks about being saved by God’s grace. God’s grace is a gift, freely given and unearned. There is nothing we can do to be good enough to save ourselves, or to make God love us any more than He already does. Faith, on the other hand, is our human response to that gift of saving grace. Grace has to come first, before we can have faith. Otherwise, what do we have faith in? It’s a good reminder that God is (and should be) the initiator of all good things. God acts first, then we respond. A “made for more” impactful life is a because of life. Because of God’s grace, because of His great love for us, because of who HE is....because of God....we have faith, we make an impact, we have purpose, we are “made for more”!! There is such freedom in that.

Where are the places in your life that you are getting this process backwards? Are you striving way too hard to live faithfully or “good” on your own without putting God first? What would it look like to live a “because of God” life? How much more of an impact could you make by letting Him lead you?

Prayer: God, show me where I’m getting life backwards and trying to have an impactful life on my own merits and hustle. Show me how I can move towards that “because of life” through your grace by following you in faith.

WEDNESDAY

In verse 9, Paul speaks about good works and boasting. Wow, we can certainly see this all around us. When the world does something good they sure do love to share about it. Social media, the news, it’s everywhere...even (although we hate to admit it) in our Christian circles. This act of seeking praise and ultimately trying to gain self-worth or identity through our own goodness is something we can all get lured into. Of course, this isn’t a new problem. We can see this over and over in Bible as well...both in the Old and New Testament. In the story of Gideon, God took away so much of Gideon’s army that there was no physical way they could have defeated their enemy without God. Gideon had no choice but to give the Glory to God. In Galatians 2 - Paul talks about how we are justified by our faith in Jesus, and not by our good works. Again in Philippians 2 - Paul talks about this very same issue of trying to earn our way. It’s a slippery slope that can lead us to trade our freedom in God’s grace for a desire to earn our own self-righteousness. When we do this we become a slave to ourselves, or even to what others think of us. When we find ourselves boasting, it should make our “check engine” light start blinking. The impact we have on the world & our community should always point to Jesus and not to ourselves. When we find ourselves seeking the praise and validation that should be His alone...it is a good indicator that we may need to examine our hearts. **Prayerfully think about a time over the past few weeks that you found yourself boasting, or maybe you accepted praise that should have been re-directed towards God. Are you striving to find your self-worth or identity in what others think of you, or are you finding your identity in the grace and freedom of Jesus? What does it look like to do good, make and impact on the world around you, and make it about honoring Him and not yourself?**

Prayer: Lord, forgive me and open my eyes to the areas that I selfishly boast and try to gain my self worth from others instead of you.

THURSDAY

It certainly show us how we are “made for more” when we read verse 10. How amazing to know that we are God’s handiwork, that He made us to do His good works, AND that he even prepared them in advance for us to do! It’s hard to imagine a more meaningful and impactful life than one prepared in advance by God specifically for us to do!! It’s crazy that we still try to go our own way, and come up with our own purpose and impact in this life...but we all do it. The self-help section of the bookstore and the amount of online quizzes and personality assessments to find purpose and identity prove this. The Good News is that our identity and purpose is already defined....it’s been prepared in advance. We don’t need to strive & hustle harder to make our impact or mark on this world. Our identity is in Christ. Our purpose, our calling, our impact on this world...is actually pretty simple - Follow Him! **Why is it hard for us to simply follow Him? What obstacles are keeping you from fully following God in your life? Make a list of those obstacles...then beside that, list ways that you might overcome them in a practical way. Pray over this list daily the next few weeks that God would help you as you strive to overcome them through His power and strength.**

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember that my purpose in life is to follow you. Help me to let go of the obstacles keeping me from fully following your lead.

FRIDAY

What would it look like for you to stop wondering, searching, or striving to find what you were made for? What if you started living that “alive with Christ” life that Paul talks about? What if instead of being stuck in the rut of... “Why am I here?”...you could rest in the freedom and have faith that God knows why you are here and that’s all that matters. What if we all just started following God wherever He leads each and every day? Sometimes we ignore the obvious because we are so caught up in finding this so-called one big life purpose or goal. Spoiler Alert - Your purpose in life is FOLLOW GOD!! It’s actually not a big mystery after all, it’s actually been in front of us the whole time...the simple daily obedience of following Him each and every day. James 2:18-19 talks about faith begin defined as trust put into evidence by our actions. Philippians 2:12-13 says that God works in and through us to fulfill His good purpose. Doing the will of God, listening and being in tune with Spirit in our normal daily grind will be the most impactful, purpose filled life we can imagine.

Pray over this and write it down in your prayer journal. Where is God calling you to be obedient in following Him on a daily basis? Where are those little moments in your ordinary daily life that you feel Him calling you to make an impact? How could that lead to a “made for more” life?

SMALL GROUP

- Are there places in your life that you are getting it backwards? Share some areas in your life that you are leading and asking God to follow you.
- What are the obstacles you listed on Thursday, and what are some of the ways you are going to prayerfully try and overcome those?
- How have you found freedom in this message this week? Why and how?
- Have you had times this week that you felt the Spirit leading you to make an impact in your daily grind this week? Without boasting, and giving all praise to God that lead you to do these good things, share a bit of testimony with the group about how God worked through your life to make an impact this week.