

**Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Ephesians 2:8-10 (HCSB)**

<sup>8</sup> For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—<sup>9</sup> not from works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

**FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED**  
THROUGH FAITH,  
*and that not of yourselves;*  
IT IS  
*the gift of God*  
not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
**FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP,**  
**CREATED**  
in  
**Christ Jesus**  
for good works  
*which* God prepared *beforehand*  
that we should walk  
in them.  
Ephesians 2:8-10

## Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible<sup>1</sup>

### Ephesians 2:8-10

**2:7-10** The work of reconciliation in these verses is described with four key terms:

- (1) "kindness" God's loving tender action;
- (2) "grace" God's free favor toward ill-deserving people (a favorite term of the apostle, used over 100 times in his letters);
- (3) "faith" the instrument that brings us empty-handed to God (*see* [Rm 10:12](#)); and
- (4) "saved" equated with new life, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from the plight described in [verses 1-3](#), liberation, and resurrection

**2:8-9** The work of salvation is for God's glory and is not accomplished by human works. The whole process of salvation is not a human achievement, but is an act of God's goodness. The emphasis is always on Christ, the object of faith, not on the amount of faith. Salvation is by God's completely unmerited favor. In the Greek text, the grammatical construction of the entire phrase **by grace through faith** serves as the antecedent of the phrase, **it is God's gift**. We must not portray grace as God's part and faith as our part, for *all* of salvation is a gift from God.

The work of reconciliation is **not from yourselves** and **not from works** so that **no one can boast**. This prevents the slightest self-congratulation or boasting in the believer. God alone saves.

**2:10 Created in Christ Jesus for good works:** The work of salvation is a display of divine handiwork. Good works are the fruit of our salvation, not the cause of it. Also, good works are not incidental to God's plan; they are instead an essential part of His redemption plan for each believer. Good works are demonstrated in gratitude, character, and actions.

ergon

#### Greek Pronunciation [EHR gahn]

**HCSB Translation** work

**Uses in Ephesians** 4

**Uses in the NT** 169

**Focus passage** [Ephesians 2:9-10](#)

*Ergon* (*work*) is related to the verbs *energeo* and *ergazomai*, both meaning *to work* or *accomplish*. Other related terms include *katergazomai* (*to effect or achieve*) and *energeia* (*working, action, or activity*). *Ergon* appears several hundred times in the Greek OT and is found in every NT book except Philemon. Paul used *ergon* in two primary ways in relation to salvation: to deny that *works* or human effort contribute to salvation ([Rm 3:20,27-28](#); [4:2,6](#); [11:6](#); [Gal 2:16](#); [3:2,5,10](#); [2Tim 1:9](#)) and to affirm that those who are saved will manifest good *works* ([1Co 15:58](#); [2Co 9:8](#); [Col 1:10](#); [2Th 2:17](#); [1Tim 2:10](#); [6:18](#); [2Tim 2:21](#); [3:17](#); [Titus 2:7,14](#)). Salvation is "not from *works*, so that no one can boast," but God created us "in Christ Jesus for good *works*, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them" ([Eph 2:9-10](#)).

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1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Ephesians 2".

**English Standard Version - Study Bible<sup>2</sup>**  
*Ephesians 2:8-10*

**2:8** **By grace** refers to God's favor upon those who have transgressed his law and sinned against him. But grace may also be understood as a "power" in these verses. God's grace not only offers salvation but also secures it.

**Saved** refers to deliverance from God's wrath at the final judgment ([Rom. 5:9](#)); "by grace you have been saved" is repeated from [Eph. 2:5](#) for emphasis. The verb form for "have been saved" (Gk. *sesōsmenoi*, perfect tense) communicates that the Christian's salvation is fully secured. **through faith**.

Faith is a confident trust and reliance upon Christ Jesus and is the only means by which one can obtain salvation. **this**. The Greek pronoun is neuter, while "grace" and "faith" are feminine. Accordingly, "this" points to the whole process of "salvation by grace through faith" as being **the gift of God** and not something that we can accomplish ourselves. This use of the neuter pronoun to take in the whole of a complex idea is quite common in Greek (e.g., [6:1](#)); its use here makes it clear that faith, no less than grace, is a gift of God. Salvation, therefore, in every respect, is **not your own doing**.

**2:9-10** Salvation is not by **works**. If it were, then those who are saved would get the glory. **created... for good works**. Salvation is not based on works, but the good works Christians do are the result and consequence of God's new creation work.

**NLT Life Application Study Bible<sup>3</sup>**  
*Ephesians 2:8-10*

**2:8, 9** When someone gives you a gift, do you say, "That's very nice—now how much do I owe you?" No, the appropriate response to a gift is "Thank you." Yet how often Christians, even after they have been given the gift of salvation, feel obligated to try to work their way to God. Because our salvation and even our faith are gifts, we should respond with gratitude, praise, and joy.

**2:8-10** We become Christians through God's unmerited favor, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we will seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness, and not merely to please ourselves. While no action or work we do can help us obtain salvation, God's intention is that our salvation will result in acts of service. We are not saved merely for our own benefit but to serve Christ and build up the church ([4:12](#)).

**2:10** We are God's masterpiece (work of art, workmanship). Our salvation is something only God can do. It is his powerful, creative work in us. If God considers us his masterpieces, we dare not treat ourselves or others with disrespect or as inferior work.

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2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Ephesians 2".

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 2002.

## Life Essentials Study Bible<sup>4</sup>

### A Principle to Live By Ephesians #4: God's Gift

*from Ephesians 2:1-10*

**When we present the message of hope in Christ, we must make sure that all people understand that good works do not contribute in any way to their salvation experience.**

It seems Paul initially focused on Gentiles when he wrote, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” ([v. 1](#)). He quickly expanded his audience to include himself and his fellow Jews when he wrote, “We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires” ([v. 3](#)). However, Paul included both Jews and Gentiles when he wrote, “But God . . . made us alive with the Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses” ([vv. 4-5](#)). (See Rm #6: Salvation through Faith, [p. 1538](#).)

Paul wanted both Jewish and Gentile believers to know that they were all saved “by grace through faith, . . . it is God’s gift” ([Eph 2:8](#)). Works were not involved whatsoever. In other words, all believers—regardless of their ethnic backgrounds and their past behavior, whether good or bad—are in Christ and have eternal hope. Jewish believers have no special advantage, even though they have been circumcised and have been attempting to keep the Ten Commandments. (See Rm #7: God’s Free Gift, [p. 1539](#).)

#### Reflection and Response

**Why is it often difficult for people to accept that salvation is a free gift and that we cannot earn our way to heaven?**

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4. Gene Getz, *Life Essentials Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2011), *WORDsearch CROSS e-book*, 1625.