

**Before and After
Ephesians Part 12**

(Ephesians 2: 1-10)

I've taken a few Evangelism classes and courses. Every class I've taken made a primary point to focus on my testimony. One class recommended that I take one 8½ by 11 piece of lined paper and make my testimony about Jesus fit onto that one sheet. In other words, keep it short and simple. Paul, in the ten verses above, sums up the work of Christ in the believers' life. It may even be a good format to follow when you are telling someone about what your life was like before you met Jesus and after you came to believe in him.

In the first three verses, Paul takes an in-depth look at life BC (before Christ). Please take some time to read it slowly. Notice in verse one that Paul says you were dead. Transgression and sin nature never bring life to you. Think back. How has your life changed since you became spiritually alive?

In verse two Paul shows the two sources of transgression and sin. Can you name them? These two kingdoms have very powerful influence. They still pull at your life but they are not your master. How would you describe your life before you met Jesus compared to your life today? I remember vowing never to go to church again. I'm so glad Jesus changed me. I can't imagine life without church.

Paul reveals how the enemy of our souls pulls people into sin in verse three. How does he do it? I know you have changed but do you still feel that pull? What do you do today to combat inner cravings, desires and thoughts that are influenced by the two kingdoms in verse two?

I'm so glad that verse four starts off with the word "But." I remember a preacher titling his message, "But God." All was lost, "but God" saved the day! Let me just highlight the wonderful intervention of the Lord in your life in the next seven verses. First, he made us alive by his grace. You, my friend, have experienced a resurrection from the dead! Second, he has seated us in the heavenly realms. You are no longer a subject of this world. You are a heavenly man, a heavenly woman. Thirdly, he has bestowed the riches of his grace upon you. You have a new influence in your life. This grace in which you now stand is the love of God. He cares for you, heals you, feeds you, protects you and gives you power to overcome any obstacle.

And lastly, you are his workmanship. Your Father is still shaping you. No matter how old you are, the Father continues to work in you so that you can be his worker here on earth. Long in advance He has prepared good works for you. Every day has been preordained by God. Every day the Father has a new plan. Every day there are good things for you to do. Every day is a new day in the Lord.

How has your life been altered lately? What changes have come? Some changes have come that have been out of your control. How can your new situation be of an advantage to the Lord? Kelly mentioned in last week's service that when she and Bill decided to buy a Curves she never knew all the opportunities that there would be to tell others about Jesus. Don't let life take advantage of you; make the most of every opportunity. You are His workmanship! You are His testimony on earth, a testimony of His great grace.