Busting Myths

Lesson 1: I Must Be Perfect to Come to Church

**Lessons in this series:** **1**[2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/344/lesson/all-christians-are-hypocrites.php) [3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/350/lesson/there-is-more-than-one-way-to-heaven.php) [4](http://www.teensundayschool.com/354/lesson/im-fine-just-the-way-i-am.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES
Goals

1. To bust the myth about Christians needing to be perfect
2. To understand we are uniquely created works of art by God
3. To equip students with a Biblical understanding of what it means to be alive in Christ

Topics:

Acceptance, Body of Christ, Christianity, Individuality, Unity, Worthiness

Scripture Memorization

Ephesians 2:10

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (10 minutes)

|  |
| --- |
| **Mirror-Mirror (Activity)**Before class, place a full-length mirror near the entrance. Choose a spot where everyone must notice his or her reflection while entering the classroom. (If a full-length mirror is unavailable, a hand-mirror will also work. As the students arrive, give them the hand mirror and ask them to look at their face in it.)Have the students get into groups of four or five, and allow them to take a few minutes to discuss the following questions. These questions can be found in the lesson workbook, or you can write them on the board. There are no right or wrong answers, but this activity will begin the process of connecting the youth to the purpose of this lesson and to each other. Allow about 10 minutes. Also, encourage everyone to share.**Discussion Questions:**1. As you walked into the room earlier, who did you see when you looked into the mirror?2. What do you feel others see when they look at you?  |

GETTING STARTED (10 minutes)

Today we will study the teachings of the apostle Paul from the book of Ephesians. Here are some important facts about Paul and this letter to the Ephesians.

• Paul did not believe in Jesus as the Christ until his conversion on the road to Damascus. Before that, he was completely at odds with the Christians. (Acts 22)
• The overall theme of Ephesians is "Unity."
• His letter is very practical to God's purpose and Christ as the center of the Church and Christian conduct.

Today, we will focus on Ephesians 2:1-10. What Paul has to say here is important for each of us to know who we really are, what we think about ourselves and who we can become in Christ. With that in mind, let's get started.

DIGGING IN (30 minutes)

**PART 1 - WHAT SIN DOES TO US**

If you are like most people, you have probably taken many pictures. I've certainly taken my share. Some were okay, but most of them didn't turn out so good. They were over-exposed, under-exposed, blurry, heads chopped off, crooked, too soon or too late and so on. When we read Ephesians 2:1-3, we will see the picture of the terrible spiritual condition of an unsaved person.

 **Read Ephesians 2:1-3

Discussion Questions:**1. There are four characteristics of the work of sin listed in these verses. What are they? *((Death, v. 1; Disobedience v. 2-3a; Sinful Nature v. 3b; and Object of Wrath v. 3c.)*2. Have you ever felt like any of these characteristics on sin? How/Why *(Allow for answers.)*3. What does it mean to be **"dead"** in your transgressions?*(This is a spiritual death with means separation from God.)*
Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

4. Why is it so hard to struggle with sin in this culture? *(It is widely accepted, encouraged, and without boundaries.)*5. Verses 2-3a mentions the characteristic **"Disobedient"**. Think about a time when you were "disobedient" towards a parent, God, or another person of authority. How did it make you feel? Why do you think you chose to do what you did at the time?

|  |
| --- |
| **What does God think about disobedience?**• Disobedience is the beginning of man's spiritual death! • All the way back to Genesis, Adam and Eve's disobedience brought DEATH and opened the door to all sin.  • Because of lust, greed, and peer pressures, we are tempted and often give in to the ways of the world, which leads to disobedience. (Romans 12:2) • We are in fact not created to be sinners, because God created male and female in His image.• We all have a choice to sin or not sin.• Sin equals separation from God.*Sin is a deadly poison, like from a Diamond Back Rattle snake, but there is nothing to be afraid of when we put our faith in God. He is our Anti-venom.* |

6. What does having a **"sinful nature"** mean to you?*(Such a person lives to please the "desires of the flesh and the wishes of the mind" (literal translation). Such a person's actions are sinful because his or her appetite is sinful.)*7. What does it mean to be an **"object of wrath"**?*(It means that we are doomed. "Whoever believes in him [Jesus] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." John 3:18 NIV)*

**Read Colossians 3:5

Discussion Questions:**1. What is Paul calling Christians with these characteristics of sin to do? *(We are to "Put to death" whatever is sin in us. In the Greek, it literally means, "Kill instantly".)*2. Why should we kill sin instantly? What makes this process so hard to do?*(So we do not let it take root in our lives/because of the lack of boundaries set, addicted, no real faith, etc.)*3. Have you ever felt like you had to be a perfect, perhaps even a sinless, person before you came to church? Why or why not?If you think God commands us to become perfect before coming to Him, I challenge you to find that anywhere in God's Word. The fact is that you will not find it. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus knows the burdens of this world and encourages us to give Him our problems, our burdens, our sin, and our struggles so He could give us REST! That's His promise. He gives us rest, grace, love, purpose and identity.

**PART 2 - WHAT GOD DOES FOR US, IN US, AND THROUGH US**

# Chisel Away (Object Talk) [Click here](http://www.teensundayschool.com/233/object-talks/chisel-away.php)Chisel Away

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works. We just need God to do some chiseling.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topics:Individuality, Spiritual Growth, Submission, Works, Worthiness Materials:Hammer and ChiselDuration:Approximately 5 minutes |  http://www.teensundayschool.com/tinymce/imagemanager/images/object_talks/hammerchisel.jpg |

What you will say:

Has anyone here ever used a hammer and a chisel?

You take the hammer and hit the chisel in such a way that it shears off pieces of whatever material you are working with to shape it into something of value. (Demonstrate by hitting the chisel with the hammer.) Artists can use the hammer and chisel on a variety of materials, such as stone, wood, and even metal.

The interesting thing is, when used in the right way, the chisel can remove large unwanted chunks very quickly, or it can carefully take away very small pieces to smooth out and perfect certain areas.

Let's  name some things that might  be created using a hammer and chisel: *(Allow a minute or so for answers. Some examples are sculptures, furniture, faces on Mount Rushmore, a canoe, or a totem pole. )*

We also use the term, "chisel away," everyday.  It means to remove the undesired part.

God is holding the hammer and the chisel. With it, He is able to remove whatever is unwanted in our lives. We cannot mold ourselves on our own.  A chunk of wood cannot mold itself into a canoe; someone must skillfully use the hammer and chisel to develop the wood into a canoe.  Just like that chunk of wood that is destined to be a canoe, we must allow God to mold us.

When we allow God to chisel us, we become His workmanship. As it says in Ephesians 2:10, "We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."  And no one knows what needs to be chiseled away from our lives better than God our Creator.

 **Ask yourself these questions:**1. Do I let God freely chisel away undesirable habits in my life, or do I tend to resist change?
2. When I pray, do I let God do some chiseling, or do I do all the talking?
3. Do I need God to chisel away large chunks, or smooth out some of my rough areas?

Ephesians 2:4-10 shows us how God works for us, how He works in us, and how He works through us. Let's examine these three aspects more closely.

**Read Ephesians 2:4-9

Discussion Questions:**1. What did God do for us? *(Because of His great love for us, He sent His Son Jesus so we could be saved through Him.)*2. Why did God send His Son, Jesus, to save us? *(Because we cannot save ourselves. Only grace through faith can save us from the consequences of sin.)*3. Salvation is described as a "Gift from God" in verse 8. What does this really mean? *(The love of God is one of the hardest things to pick up on because we do not totally understand the word "FREE". Today we hear the word free, but we know there is usually a catch.)*Unfortunately, many people feel they must do something to be worthy of God's free gift. Some believe they must be perfect before they can approach God. The Bible tells us that works cannot save us, because Salvation is free.

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook Activity**Works cannot save us**Look up the following verses, and list the different kinds of works that cannot save us.Galatians 2:16, 3:11 (Works of Law cannot save us.)Galatians 5:19-21 (Works of the flesh cannot save us.)Romans 13:12, Ephesians 5:11 (Works of darkness cannot save us.)Hebrews 6:1, Romans 6:23 (Works of death cannot save us)Titus 3:5, Isaiah 64:6 (Works of righteousness cannot save us.) |

**Read Ephesians 2:10**
This verse tells us how God works in us and through us. The first part says we are God's workmanship. In the Greek, this word is "poema" which sounds a lot like poem. Literally, it means we are God's masterpiece, His work of art.

**Discussion Questions:**1. Do you ever feel like a masterpiece or work of art? Why or why not?
2. What do you feel God's purpose is in you? *(Workers, witnesses for Christ.)*3. How is God working through us according to Paul? *(Evangelistic, works of faith in action.)*4. Is Paul saying in verse 10 that we are saved by doing good works? Why or why not?  *(No, Paul is saying that real faith is active and not dead.)*

MAKING IT REAL (15 minutes)

• Are you ready to allow God to have complete control of your life, to form you into His masterpiece to do good works? Why or why not?

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook ActivityThink back about the hammer and chisel illustration. Take a moment now, and list three areas in your life that you know need to be chiseled away.1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Here is the challenge. I want all of you to give up something today. Whatever it is, give it to God and let Him heal or take you in as His son or daughter!  Remember, you are God's Poem! You are His masterpiece, His heartbeat, His creation, His image, His love, and His redemption!

Do not leave here without the understanding that you DO NOT have to be perfect, ever! We are God's Workmanship created to do good works, but we do not have to be perfect before coming to Christ. Come as you are. Here is a quote from an anonymous author that drives home this point: "*Christianity isn't about making bad people good--It's about bringing dead people ALIVE*!"

Have everyone repeat aloud the following statement, inserting his or her name in the blank space.

                           Say:        (Your Name)             is God's original masterpiece.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

(Have the students say this prayer along with you. Pause along the way so they can repeat the words.)
"Heavenly Father, I don’t want to miss out on Your best that You have given me. I know that I am not perfect and that I understand now that You have made me with purpose. I know that I am Your workmanship created by the best architect this world has ever seen. God, forgive me as I have dishonored You and allow the Holy Spirit to work in me and cleanse me with Your Holy Grace. Amen."