



1. Last week, we discussed the biblical truth that Christians are not saved by good works, but are justified by faith in Jesus (Romans 1:17). How can morality and religious achievement become obstacles to receiving the gospel and living by faith? Have you experienced this?
2. The Bible teaches that people remain in spiritual bondage without faith in Christ. In Ephesians 2:1-3, spiritual deadness is described in three ways: following the curse of *the world*, living by *the sinful nature*, and being deceived by *the devil*. How do these three spiritual conditions work against the nonbeliever? How does faith in Christ redeem us from such bondage? (Ephesians 2:4-10)
3. Faith is the essential aspect of Christian living. But how is faith obtained? According to Ephesians 2:8, faith is neither a mere intellectual response nor the achievement of personal goodness, but is rather “the gift of God.” Read and discuss John 11:38-44, 2 Timothy 1:5-10 and Titus 3:3-8. How did God grant us new life in Christ through faith? How have you experienced a spiritual transformation from death to life?
4. Since the Reformation, the church has historically taught that the new birth (regeneration) of the Christian precedes faith (conversion). In other words, our response of repentance and faith follows God’s work in our hearts and minds. Read and discuss John 3:1-8 and 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, and 5:1. Why is it important to know that our salvation is based on God’s work and not our own efforts? (See also Ephesians 1:11-14, Acts 16:14, and John 6:44.)
5. Discuss the following quote on the gift of faith. What are the practical implications of living by faith? How does the reality of faith as a gift of God free us to pray, show gratitude, and share the gospel with confidence?

God does not believe for us, but He does through His Spirit create spiritual life in us so that we can believe. Faith is a gift of God. It is part of the whole salvation package that God gives to us through the work of Christ for us and the work of the Holy Spirit in us. It is not our contribution, so to speak, to God’s great plan of salvation. God does it all. Faith is part of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life*, 122

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