

UNIDENTIFIED

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH OF WHO WE REALLY ARE

SESSION 2: UNIDENTIFIED FROM SIN

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: Students will discover that the sinful nature we all inherit not only takes away our identity in God but also stamps us with an identity of its own. Students will learn that, while they are dead in sin, they can be raised with Christ and unidentified from their sin by grace through faith.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:1-10; Acts 9:1-15

SESSION SNAPSHOT: We all know what it's like to have something follow us around and haunt us - a bad driving record, an embarrassing memory, or even a bad nickname. We can often be known and identified by things we'd rather forget. In a similar way, the sinful nature we all inherit not only takes away our God-given identity but also gives us an identity of its own. In this session, your students will wrestle with what it means to be dead in sin while also grasping the truth that they can be raised with Christ and unidentified from their sin because of His great love and mercy.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.



TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each Leader's Guide comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Unidentified* Lesson 2 Teacher Prep Video, click on the link below:

- https://youtu.be/hCbMawGvz_g

THE DETAILS

EPHESIANS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians, among several others. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't

help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

ACTS

- **Author:** Acts has long been held to be a letter from Luke, a Gentile physician, to a man named Theophilus, possibly a benefactor of some sort.
- **Time frame:** There is some debate over when Acts was written. The suggested dates are between 70 and 80 AD
- **Purpose:** The Book of Acts is a second letter to Theophilus that tells the story of the early Church following Jesus' resurrection. The book begins with Jesus' ascension and His command that His followers proclaim the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The rest of the book traces this journey as the early church leaders proclaim the Gospel and plant churches.

THE MAIN POINT

The main point for this lesson is found in verses 4-5 of Ephesians 2. Paul writes that even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God, being rich in mercy and love, made us alive in Christ. It's by grace that we've been saved. We can look to good works or to being good people to try to shake off our sinful, shameful identities, but that isn't enough because we're not only identified by sin...we're dead in it. But through faith and by God's grace, we can be raised with Christ. We can be unidentified from our sin, reidentified in Jesus, and brought from death to life.

THE TAKEAWAY

Students are not immune to the temptation to look to good works for some type of salvation. But the salvation offered to us in Jesus is only by grace through faith. As Paul says, it's not of our own doing; it's a gift. It's not a result of any good works we could ever do. This doesn't mean that good works aren't important, though. In fact, God has prepared good works that we should walk in once we've been unidentified from sin and raised to life in Christ. Use these passages in Ephesians and Acts to show your students that while salvation isn't found in good works, it is expressed through them. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

LESSON PLAN

THE LESSON PLAN CONTAINS THREE ELEMENTS:

- **Getting Started** - An interactive way of kicking off your time by introducing the lesson's general focus
- **Digging In** - The section where you'll settle down and dig through Scripture
- **Wrapping Up** - The section where you'll give students practical takeaways to apply in their lives

GETTING STARTED

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This lesson will utilize pages 13-17 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.
 - This activity will use pages 13-14.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - Make sure your students have a Bible, their Student Books, and something to write with.
 - You may want to have some extra Bibles in case a student forgets theirs.

FIRST, ask your students to turn to page 13 and, if you think it would be helpful, read or have a student read the session intro. If you choose not to do this, direct their attention to page 14, where they'll find the Getting Started activity. To begin this session, your students will be writing down their most embarrassing memory - the story that sticks with them and they just can't seem to get away from.

NEXT, instruct your students to write their most embarrassing memory down in the space provided. Make them aware that they will have the opportunity to share their memory, as that may impact what they choose to write. When enough time has passed or each student is done, ask the questions below:

- What about this memory makes it so embarrassing?
 - *Answers will vary.*
- What part of this story sticks with you the most? Why?
 - *Answers will vary.*
- If you could go back in time and someone was to try to help you escape this embarrassing situation, what would you want them to do? How would you want them to save you from it?
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, when you've finished, say something like:

- We all have at least one pretty embarrassing memory. Whether it was something we wore, something we did, something we said, or something else, we all have that one memory that haunts us to this day. It could've even happened a long time ago, but we still feel the consequences of it. Some people might identify us by that memory by giving us a nickname that we don't really like or bringing it up whenever they see us. No matter what we do, that memory and the identity it earned us just stick with us. In this session, we're going to be talking about some other things that stick with us, cause us a lot of trouble, and earn us a pretty terrible identity, but thankfully, Someone's there to save us in this story.

IF THERE ARE NO COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, TRANSITION TO THE DIGGING IN SECTION OF YOUR LESSON.

DIGGING IN

- **Student Book Pages**

- This activity will utilize pages 15-16 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.

- **Additional Instructions**

- You'll want to make sure students have something to write with and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 15 of their Student Books, where they'll find two boxes at the top of the page. Then **say**:

- **Take a couple of minutes and write in the box at the top of this page how you would define "sin." What do you think it is? What do you think it does to us? Do you think sin has consequences?**
 - **Answers will vary.**

THEN, once they finish, have a brief discussion of your students' answers. Let them share what they wrote down and learn from each other. While they share, ask them to write down some common themes or words they hear multiple times in the second box. **Then say something like:**

- **Sin is pretty difficult to define in just a few words. The idea is that when we sin, we're missing the mark or failing to meet the goal. But what mark or goal are we missing? Well, in our last session, we learned that every human ever created is made in the image of God. That means that everyone you ever meet is worthy of respect and love because they are an image-bearer of God, just like you. So the goal is to perfectly love God and others, but we all know that we've epically failed to do that. But here's where it gets tricky, sin is more than just the wrong things we do. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, sin is a part of who we are. When we're born, we're all identified by sin. It sticks with us, and we can't escape it. And that's exactly what Paul talks about in our passage for this session.**

NEXT, encourage them to find Ephesians 2 in their Bible. If you think it would be helpful, use the *Details* section of the *Bible Background* to give some context. Then read or have a student read Ephesians 2:1-3, and work through the following questions:

- **What's your first reaction to hearing that you're dead in your sin? What do you think that actually means?**
 - **Answers will vary.** If you choose, you can remind students that, in session 1, we said that separation from God because of sin is spiritual death.
- **What do you think it means to follow the course of this world? Can you give some examples of that?**
 - **Answers will vary but might include:** Gossiping, lying, drugs, sexual immorality, etc.
- **What does it mean that we are all "by nature, children of wrath?"**
 - **Answer:** Sin is more than making mistakes, doing the wrong things, or displeasing God. Sin is a part of who we are. We're born into it. We

inherited a sinful identity, just like all of humanity, and therefore are deserving of God's wrath.

- Is it hard to believe that no matter how "good" you think you are that you're still identified by sin? Why or why not?
 - *Answers will vary.*

NEXT, read or have a student read Ephesians 2:4-7. **Ask:**

- Why do you think it's important that God loved us even when we were dead in our sin against Him?
 - *Answers will vary.*
- What does this say about God?
 - **Answer:** God is abundantly loving, compassionate, powerful, and forgiving. Even though we deserved wrath and judgment, He chose to forgive us and make us alive.
- What do you think it means to be raised with Christ? How do you think this affects your identity?
 - *Answers will vary.* Just as Jesus died and resurrected, when we profess faith in Him, we are brought back to spiritual life too. This is the only way to escape our identity of sin.
- How has God shown you the "immeasurable riches of His grace" in your life?
 - *Answers will vary.*

THEN, read or have a student read Ephesians 2:8-10. When finished, **ask:**

- Think of some things that you think make you a good person or some good deeds you've done recently. Write some of them down.
 - *Answers will vary.* Feel free to let students share their answers.
- Why can't we be saved by "our own doing?"
 - **Answer:** Sin has made it impossible for us to make ourselves right with God. A perfect sacrifice was required to mend that relationship, and that's what Jesus came to do.
- What does being God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, say about your identity?
 - **Answer:** It reaffirms what Genesis 1 and John 1 say! We are created in God's image. We are His workmanship. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can be unidentified from sin and reidentified to whom we were meant to be.

FINALLY, pull this all together for your students. Try to emphasize that we are all identified by sin as soon as we come into this world, but through Jesus, we can be unidentified from our sinful nature. **Say something like:**

- Our sinful nature is something that we can't escape on our own, and it's earned us an identity we weren't created to have. Without Jesus, every one of us is spiritually dead, following the course of this world, and a child of wrath. We are separated from God and followed around by our sinful identity. But God is too loving, merciful, gracious, and kind to leave us there. He sent Jesus to

die and be raised back to life so that we could be reidentified in Him. Through faith and by God's grace, He takes away our sinful identities and gives us a brand new identity in Jesus. What a gift!

ASK IF ANYONE HAS ANY THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS, THEN
TRANSITION TO THE WRAPPING UP PORTION OF YOUR LESSON.

WRAPPING UP

- **Student Book Pages**

- o This activity will utilize page 17 in the *Unidentified* Student Book.

- **Additional Instructions**

- o Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, instruct students to turn to page 17 in their books. In this section, your students will read the story of Paul's conversion. They will see how Paul's story goes hand in hand with our earlier passage and reflect on what this kind of radical transformation might look like in their own lives.

THEN read or have a student read Acts 9:1-15. When finished, direct students' attention to the questions below the passage. **Say something like:**

- This story that we just heard goes hand in hand with the passage we read from Ephesians. Saul (you may know him as Paul) was dead in his sins and persecuting the Church, but God radically transformed him and gave him true life and a new identity. Paul was then sent with the command from God to live into that new identity as God's "chosen instrument." The truth is that without Jesus, we're all dead in our sin, living in our sinful identities, and heading in a direction that's opposite of God. But once we've been unidentified from sin and reidentified in Jesus, the way we live and walk through life should change because we're also God's instruments. As Ephesians 2 says, He prepared good works for us to walk in. With this in mind, take a few minutes to silently reflect and answer the questions at the bottom of the page.

When enough time has passed, instruct students to start wrapping up if they haven't already. Begin wrapping up this session by **saying something like:**

- We started this session on a pretty bad foot. Coming to terms with the fact that we all have a sinful nature that follows us around, gives us an unwanted identity, and separates us from God probably isn't something you wanted to hear. But what we finished with is great news! The truth that God sent Jesus to give us real life, take away our sinful identity, and give us a new identity in Him is life-changing! We may have some embarrassing memories that'll haunt us forever, but because of Jesus, we don't have to be identified by our sin ever again. We can be unidentified from our sin and raised to life because of God's great love, mercy, and grace.

FINALLY, ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-42 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them. The second devotion is on page 37.

IF THERE ARE NO MORE QUESTIONS, CLOSE IN PRAYER FOR YOUR GROUP.