
NOW & THEN

Lesson 2



NOW / THEN – Week 2

Already Seated, Still Standing

Primary Scripture: Ephesians 2:4–7 (NLT)

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is designed to help you live faithfully between what Christ has already done and what He is still bringing to completion.

1. The Problem We Experience

Scripture speaks about identity in clear and decisive terms. It tells us that we are new, forgiven, alive in Christ, and raised with Him. These are not partial statements or future promises—they are declarations of what is already true. And yet, our daily experience often does not reflect that reality. We continue to struggle with sin, inconsistency, fear, and habits that feel resistant to change. This creates confusion, not because Scripture is unclear, but because we expect our experience to immediately align with what God has declared. When that does not happen, we begin to question whether something is wrong—with our faith or with God's work. But the tension is not evidence of failure. It is the normal condition of a life that has been made new but is still being transformed.

We are told:

- You are new
- You are forgiven
- You are alive in Christ

And yet:

- You still struggle
- You still doubt
- You still feel inconsistent

This is not a contradiction.

This is where the Christian life is lived.

2. What God Has Already Done (Ephesians 2:4–7)

In Ephesians 2, Paul describes what God has already accomplished through Jesus. He uses completed language, not future language. He says that God has made us alive with Christ, raised us with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms. These statements describe a finished work, not a process that is still uncertain. This means that your identity is not something you are working toward—it is something you have already been given. You are not becoming



alive; you have been made alive. You are not moving toward acceptance; you have already been accepted. The challenge is not that this is untrue, but that it is often not yet reflected in how we think, feel, or live.

Read: Ephesians 2:4–7

Key Truths:

- You have been made alive with Christ
 - You have been raised with Him
 - You are seated with Him in a position of victory
 - Your identity is already established in Christ
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Reflection

Where are you still trying to earn, prove, or secure something that God has already declared to be true?

3. Why Your Experience Feels Different (Galatians 5:16–17)

Even though your identity is secure, your experience is still being formed. Scripture is direct about this. In Galatians 5, Paul describes an ongoing conflict between the desires of the flesh and the leading of the Spirit. This conflict is not a contradiction of your identity—it is evidence that transformation is taking place. Many people assume that real change would eliminate struggle. Scripture teaches the opposite: the presence of struggle often reveals that new life is active and resisting what no longer belongs. The issue is not whether struggle exists, but how it is interpreted. When misunderstood, it leads to discouragement. When understood correctly, it becomes evidence that God’s work is not absent, but active.

Read: Galatians 5:16–17

Key Truths:

- There is an ongoing internal tension in the Christian life
 - Transformation happens over time, not instantly
 - Struggle does not cancel identity
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Reflection

Where have you interpreted ongoing struggle as spiritual failure instead of recognizing it as part of transformation?



4. The Difference Between Position and Practice (Colossians 3:1–10)

Scripture makes a clear distinction between what is already true about you and how you are learning to live. In Colossians 3, Paul begins by stating that believers have been raised with Christ. This is a statement of position—it describes what is already true. He then gives instruction about how to live—what to set your mind on, what to put to death, and what to put on. This is practice. The order matters. You do not live differently in order to become something new. You live differently because you already are something new. When this order is misunderstood, people either try to become what they already are, or give up because they believe they are not changing fast enough.

Read: Colossians 3:1–10

Key Truths:

- Position comes before practice
- Identity is not earned through behavior
- Growth is learning to live out what is already true

Reflection

Where are you trying to change your behavior in order to become something, instead of living from what God has already made you?

5. Living Between Identity and Experience

The Christian life is lived between two realities: who you already are in Christ and how you are still being formed. These realities are not in conflict, but they are not yet fully aligned. Your identity is complete, but your experience is still catching up to what is already true. Many people reverse this relationship—they evaluate their identity based on their experience. Scripture teaches the opposite: your experience is being shaped by your identity. When this is misunderstood, people either strive to become what they already are or doubt what God has already declared. Growth begins when you stop trying to achieve identity and begin learning to live from it.

NOW (Already True)

- You are alive in Christ

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- You are forgiven
- You are raised and seated with Him
- Your identity is secure

THEN (Not Yet Complete)

- Your behavior is still being transformed
- Your thinking is still being renewed
- Your habits are still being reshaped
- Your experience does not yet fully reflect your identity

Reflection

Which are you relying on more—your experience, or what God has declared to be true?

6. Why This Feels Disorienting

We naturally evaluate ourselves based on what we can see and feel. When our experience does not match what Scripture says is true, we assume that something is wrong. But the issue is not that God’s work is incomplete—it is that we expect it to be immediate. Scripture teaches that identity is established instantly, but transformation unfolds over time. The disorientation comes from expecting both to happen at the same pace. When we demand visible change as proof of truth, we begin to measure God’s faithfulness by our experience. Faith requires trusting what God has declared, even while our lives are still being shaped by it.

Reflection

Where are your expectations of immediate change shaping your frustration?

7. Formation Practice (This Week)



Practice: Live From Identity, Not Toward It

Each day this week, follow this exact pattern:

Step 1 — Identify One Specific Area

Choose one area where your experience does not match your identity in Christ.

Use the same area every day.

Step 2 — Declare What Is True

Write one clear statement from Scripture about what is already true.

Do not write what you feel—write what is true.

Step 3 — Act From That Truth

Make one deliberate decision based on that truth, even if your emotions do not agree.

Step 4 — Repeat Daily

Return to the same situation each day.

Do not move on until all three steps are completed.

Daily Prayer

Lord,
Help me live from what You have already declared to be true.
Keep me from defining myself by what I feel or experience.
Teach me to trust my identity in Christ,
even while I am still being transformed.
Amen.

8. Living It Out

Choose one area where you feel stuck or inconsistent.

Write it down:

Now write what is already true about you in Christ in this area:



Each day this week:

- Return to this same situation
- State what is true
- Act from that truth

Growth is not becoming someone new.
It is learning to live as who you already are.

Final Note

You are not working toward identity.
You are living from it.

You are already seated with Christ—
even while you are still learning to stand.

