



Scripture



Nehemiah 7:73b; 8:1-6; 9:1-5; 10:28-29

73b And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns. **1** And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. **2** So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. **3** And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. **4** And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. **5** And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. **6** And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. ... **1** Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were

assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. **2** And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. **3** And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. **4** On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their God. **5** Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, “Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. ... **28** “The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, **29** join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God’s Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his rules and his statutes.

Unit .18

Session .03

God Revives His People Through a Scribe

How can you tell if a church is centered on the proclamation of God's Word or centered on something else? Why is gathering to hear God's Word so important for believers?

What things may be filling up your heart and life and preventing you from having a hunger and thirst for God's Word?



99 Essential Doctrines

Preservation of Scripture

God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity through the text of Scripture, having inspired it and directed it to be free from error. God has also acted providentially throughout the course of history to ensure the biblical text is faithfully preserved for future generations. Our belief in the preservation of Scripture is supported by investigation into how the canon of Scripture was formed and how manuscripts were faithfully transmitted throughout the centuries.

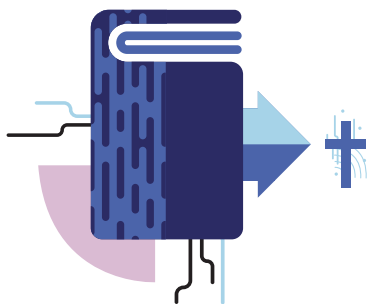
Main Point

God's Word draws us toward unity and repentance.

What is our individual responsibility to confess sin? What is our corporate responsibility as a church? What might each of these look like?

What are some common ways we make God out to be more restrictive than He actually is?

What are the ways we can help one another shoulder the weight of commitment in our local church, families, or communities?



Christ Connection

When God's people heard the reading of His Word, they responded by confessing their sins and committing to obey God's law. They would later fail to obey God as they had promised. Jesus is the Word of God who takes away our sin, gives us His righteousness, and changes our hearts so we can obey God.



Head

Why do we so often fail to crave God's Word as we should?

What are some ways we can increase our desire to read and listen to God's Word?



Heart

Why do you think God chose His Word to be the main source for bringing revival?

What areas in your life need to be reprioritized this week in order to experience real community and accountability this week?

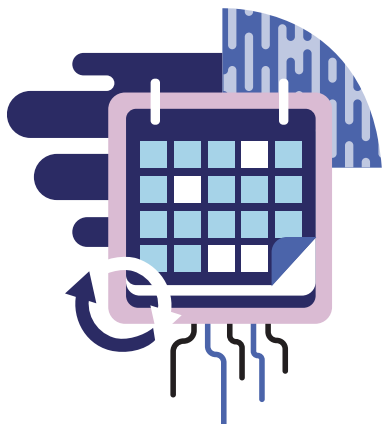


Hands

When has someone helped you understand something difficult in Scripture?

How can you be active in your church in helping the next generation understand the truths of the Bible?

Daily Devotions



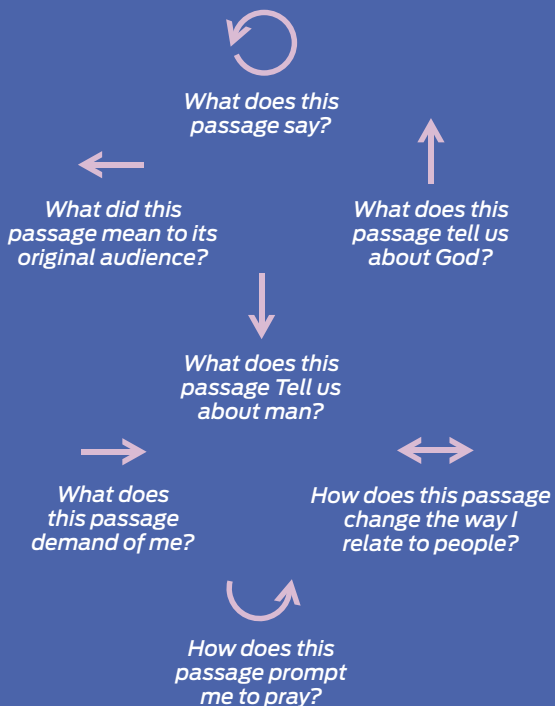
Day 1

Nehemiah 7:73b–8:18

The Scriptures are always after the heart; they are directed beneath the surface of the hearer to the seat of the soul. This is why, as you read or hear the Scriptures, you interact with them differently based on the state of your heart. If your heart is dull or hard to the things of God, then the words of God may not affect you. But if your heart is soft and ignited by the Spirit of God, then the words of God often come alive in your heart in unimaginable and powerful ways.

The Israelites who had returned from exile were eager to avoid yet another exile for their disobedience, so they turned their hearts to the Word of God to know what God expected of them. The posture in which they requested, received, and responded to the reading of God's Word revealed the inner workings of their heart. Their faith in the Lord was deepened through personal, intentional, and thoughtful interaction with the Scriptures followed by joyful obedience. Their posture and practice are a pathway to be considered and followed as we read and hear God's Word.

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



What rhythms do you have in your life for personal, intentional, and thoughtful interaction with the Scriptures?

Nehemiah

9:1-38

The Israelites had been told not to weep or grieve at the initial hearing of God’s law (Neh. 8:9-12). But there was a time to weep for their sins. God had given them commands to obey, and the people’s disobedience had wrecked them over and over and over again, and the consequences for their sin were still being felt.

Yet they came to God in prayer and praise with hope because of who He is. Their song of blessing proclaimed the Lord as the Creator, the covenant-maker and keeper, and their deliverer. Their song also confessed with honesty how the people had failed to honor the Lord in obedience. But this highlighted yet another reason to praise the Lord—He is gracious in His forgiveness and faithful in His patience.

This prayer of praise summarizes the storyline of the Old Testament, and this is the story of God and His work in the world. The truth of these Scriptures grounded their requests and their steps going forward.

How does Scripture ground your requests before God?

Nehemiah

10:1-39

The revival of the people resulted in a commitment to obedience. It is necessary for us to see that their commitment to obey wasn’t just affirmation of duty but an expression of delight—an expression of their renewed faith in their Creator and Savior God (Neh. 9:5-37).

Whenever we commit to obey God it should be for the same reasons—duty and delight. We find ourselves in a dangerous space when we reduce obedience to duty (I only obey because I must) or delight (I only obey when I want to). Obedience for the Christian must be both, an outworking of our faith in Christ and an expression of our love for God.

To desire, delight in, cherish, and value God is to obey Him. Our obedience to His commands is evidence of our relationship with Him as our Father, and that relationship is grounded in faith (1 John 5:1-4). Only by faith in the one true God and His Son sent for our salvation can we obey the Lord from duty and delight.

What are some reasons you resist obedience to God, and how can you grow in your faith to obey from duty and delight?

Nehemiah

11:1–12:47

Even though the wall around Jerusalem had been rebuilt, the city was still sparsely populated (Neh. 7:4). The pride and joy of Judah, the city for the Lord's dwelling in the temple, remained impoverished. The people did not want to live there, and given the incredible opposition from enemies while the walls were being built, who could blame them. Yet God had promised a restoration of His people and His promised land, and that required people living in the capital city.

The bulk of chapters 11–12 is a listing of names and numbers of people who were called out by the casting of lots to pick up from their hometowns and move into Jerusalem. These verses testify to the faithfulness of God and the privilege of obedience. The Lord populated His city, and the people who came were recorded in Scripture and blessed by their countrymen.

How are you being called to obey in ways you may not want to?

Nehemiah

13:1-31

The people in the promised land had committed themselves to obedience to the Lord's commands and signed their names to this promise (Neh. 9–10). But that didn't stop some of the people from disobeying once again. Chapter 13 contains examples of people dishonoring the temple, the Sabbath, and God's law about marrying idol worshipers (those who rejected their idols were allowed to worship the one true God along with the people of God; see Ruth; Ezra 6:21).

As Nehemiah called people to account for their willful disobedience, he called on the Lord to remember him for his faithfulness (Neh. 13:14,22,31). If he had wanted to be remembered by the people he governed, he could have enabled their disobedience, approved of it, and even participated in it. But his focus and desire was on the Lord, to be remembered by our faithful and compassionate God. This ought always to be our desire as Christians—not to please human beings but the God whose favor is everlasting (Gal. 1:10).

How does the gospel of Jesus Christ figure into our favor with God?