

R  N
are you in?

LifeGroups
get connected.

TRANSFORMATION

"And we... are being transformed into His likeness."

2 Corinthians 3:18

CHETS TOP 5

Vacation Bible
School
Registration
June 20th - 23rd
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Florida Baptist
Children's Home
Envelopes
May 9th

Preschool Day at
the Park
May 16th • 1:00 p.m.

Shoes for Haiti
May 16th

Volunteer
Celebration
May 23rd • 6:00 p.m.



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Volume XI No. 17

Discussion Guide

Life Sentences - "Ezra"

FOCUS: to discover four general abilities of godly leaders and will identify ways to implement these abilities in their lives.

"For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel." Ezra 7:10 (NIV)

I. Devotion to the Word of the Lord – Ezra 7:10

A. To what three things had Ezra devoted himself?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

B. Ezra 7:6 (NIV) tells us that Ezra was "well-versed" in the Law of Moses. How "well-versed" are you in the Bible?

C. Sometimes we know what the Bible says but fail to put it into practice. Compared to Ezra, how well do you observe the Law of the Lord?

D. Who looks to you as a leader when it comes to studying, observing and teaching the Law of the Lord?

II. Faith in the Protection of the Lord – Ezra 8:21-23; 31

A. Why did Ezra proclaim a fast?

B. Why was Ezra ashamed to ask for the king's protection?

C. How was Ezra's caravan able to travel safely between the Ahava Canal and Jerusalem?

D. What does this part of the story reveal about God's protection for his people?

E. What steps could you take to depend less on your own strength and more on God's protection in the challenges you face?

III. Evidence of the Hand of the Lord – Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 31

A. What evidence of God's hand on Ezra and his work do you see in these verses?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

B. Why is it important that followers are able to see God at work in the life of their leaders?

C. Can your family, friends and/or co-workers see evidence of God at work in your life?

IV. A Healthy Fear of the Lord – Ezra 9:1-4; 10:1-4

A. Of what sin were the Israelites guilty?

B. How did Ezra react?

C. What were the reactions of the people?

D. How did Ezra demonstrate his wisdom as a leader in this event?

E. Have we become so accustomed to sin that we no longer have a healthy fear of God?

F. How has this event in the life of Ezra changed the way you will respond the next time you sin?

Read Thru the Bible

"How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey. Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate every false way of life. Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."

Psalm 119:103-105

May	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalm	Proverbs
9	Judges 13:1-15:8	Luke 23:1-19	57:7-11	13:7-8
10	Judges 15:9-17:13	Luke 23:20-38	58:1-5	13:9-10
11	Judges 18:1-31	Luke 23:39-56	58:6-11	13:11-12
12	Judges 19:1-20:25	Luke 24:1-24	59:1-10	13:13
13	Judges 20:26-21:25	Luke 24:25-53	59:11-17	13:14-15
14	Ruth 1:1-2:23	John 1:1-23	60:1-5	13:16-17
15	Ruth 3:1-4:22	John 1:24-51	60:6-12	13:18-20
16	I Samuel 1:1-2:36	John 2:1-25	61:1-8	13:21-22

LifeGroup Prayer Requests:

"You are not responsible for everyone in the church family - but you are responsible to them. So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

LOOKING TOWARD NEXT SUNDAY

Nehemiah - Nehemiah 6:3

To discuss the focus of Nehemiah and be challenged to focus on God's call on his/her life and to write their Life Sentence.

MONDAY - MAY 10, 2010

Read Neh.1:1-2:20 Who is Nehemiah?

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." 4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. 5 Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. (not all verses printed due to space)

- Nehemiah is a contemporary of what priest? See Neh. 8:9
- What is Nehemiah's position in regards to the king? Reread Neh. 2:1
- What position was Nehemiah given over Jerusalem? See Neh.5:14?
- The name Nehemiah comes from the Hebrew Nehemiah which means "Comfort of God". How did God use Nehemiah comfort His people?

TUESDAY - MAY 11, 2010

Read Nehemiah 4:1-6 Restoration of God's People

1 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 2 and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?" 3 Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" 4 Hear us, O our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of [a] the builders. 6 So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

- While Ezra deals with the religious restoration of Judah, Nehemiah is primarily concerned with Judah's political and geographical restoration.
- Why did Ezra's work precede Nehemiah's?
- Have you allowed God to "restore" you spiritually so He can then "rebuild" your life to His purposes?

WEDNESDAY - MAY 12, 2010

Read Nehemiah 4:7-6:19 Rebuilding the Walls

7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. 9 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. 10 Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall." 11 Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." 12 Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." 13 Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. 14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." 15 When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work. 16 From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah 17 who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, 18 and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. (not all verses printed due to space)

- How long did it take to rebuild the walls? See Nehemiah 6:15
- Why is this time of rebuilding important?
- How long did it take to rebuild and reform the people of God within the walls?

THURSDAY - MAY 13, 2010

Read Nehemiah 9:1-38 God's Faithfulness

1 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. 2 Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers. 3 They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God. 4 Standing on the stairs were the Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani—who called with loud voices to the LORD their God. 5 And the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah—said: “Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.” “Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. 6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you. 7 “You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. 8 You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

(not all verses printed due to space)

- Were the Israelites faithful to the covenant they had with God?
- Was God faithful to them?
- Does this pattern of God's faithfulness toward His people in spite of their repeated unfaithfulness toward Him convict you of your unfaithfulness toward God?

FRIDAY - MAY 14, 2010

Read Nehemiah 13 and Nehemiah 6:3 Staying Focused

1 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, 2 because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) 3 When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent. 4 Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, 5 and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests. 6 But while all this was going on, I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission 7 and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. 8 I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. 9 I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense. 10 I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. 11 So I rebuked the officials and asked them, “Why is the house of God neglected?” Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

(not all verses printed due to space)

- Did Nehemiah establish good and restore righteousness among the Jewish people?
- Why is Nehemiah 6:3 a good verse for the Life Sentence of Nehemiah?
- Do you get sidetracked from that which God is calling you to do?