

### Next Steps

- I will yield to God's Word and its authority.
- I will take the challenge to move from hobby to habit by \_\_\_\_\_
- I will surround myself with people who will help me know and practice God's Word.
- I want to break out of mediocrity and live a life of complete surrender to God's will for me.

### For the Family

#### Review our story so far:

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to repair the walls around the city. He rallied the people, and they began the work. Some enemies of Jerusalem tried to stop them, but Nehemiah prayed and set up some guards. He encouraged the rich people to help poor families so they could work on the wall. A man named Sanballat tried to get Nehemiah to stop, but he would not because he was doing a great work for God.

**This week** we are introducing another character into our story, whose name was Ezra. Ezra led the second return of the exiles back to Jerusalem (Nehemiah led the third return.) He worked with Nehemiah to help the Jews make Jerusalem their home.

**Read together Ezra 7:10** –*For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.*

#### Explain the three things that Ezra did:

1. He studied God's Word
2. He obeyed God's Word
3. He taught God's Word to other people.

**Talk together** about how important it is to read God's Word every day, and to obey what it says all day long. We should also look for opportunities to teach others what it means to obey God.

**Pray together** that you will read God's Word every day, and that you will do the best you can to obey what it says. Tell God that you will look for opportunities to teach others.



## Ezra – Breaking out of Mediocrity

*Ezra 7:10*

**Our Story So Far:** Nehemiah learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were in ruins. He prayed, and received permission from King Artaxerxes to go to Jerusalem. He inspected the walls and gates, and rallied the people to rise up and do the work. Some local leaders tried to stop the work by accusing them of rebelling against the king. Nehemiah replied that the God of heaven would help them rebuild the wall.

Sanballat and other enemies of Jerusalem taunted the workers and plotted to confuse them. Nehemiah prayed, and set up security all around the wall. He encouraged the people to remember the greatness of God, and to fight for their families. Some among the wealthy were exploiting the poor through excessive interest on loans, and repossessing their land. Nehemiah spoke out against this, and the wealthy agreed to stop charging interest to the poor, and to return their property.

When the work was almost finished, Sanballat and the others renewed their opposition. They tried to trick Nehemiah to meet with them, spread false rumors about him, and bribed a prophet to give him a false oracle. Nehemiah knew that their intentions were evil, and he did not allow them to circumvent the work.

**This Week:** We will meet another character in this story, a man named Ezra. Ezra was committed to knowing, doing, and teaching God's Word. He returned to Jerusalem during the second return, and he was there when Nehemiah arrived with the third group. Ezra plays a crucial role in the ongoing story of the return from exile.

## Open

Is anybody in your group doing what their parents or grandparents did for a living?

Who was the best teacher you ever had?

What did you appreciate about them?

Have you tried to imitate them in any way?

## Read Ezra 7:1-10

1. What do you learn about Ezra from this passage?

2. Why was it important to be able to trace Ezra's ancestry all the way back to Aaron?

3. Where have we heard the phrase "*the hand of his God was upon him*"? (Nehemiah 2:8, 18; see also Ezra 7:28; 8:18, 22, 31)

Why does the writer of Ezra-Nehemiah emphasize this throughout his story?

4. According to verse 10, to what had Ezra devoted his life?

## Reflect

1. Ezra was "well versed in the law of Moses."  
What is something you are well-versed in?

Are you well-versed in God's Word?

What would it take for you to become well-versed?

2. Ezra was devoted to obeying God's Word.  
How devoted are you to obeying God's Word?

What would it take to become more devoted to obedience?

3. Ezra was also devoted to teaching God's Word to his people.  
How devoted are you to teaching God's Word?

What holds you back from teaching?

What would it take for you to teach God's Word?

## Read 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

1. Why does Paul emphasize his character and suffering?

List everything Paul mentions about his character. 10-11

How does each one of them fit into a life of discipleship?

2. Paul lists several profitable results from Scripture. 16

What do each of the following mean:

Teaching

Reproof

Correction

Training in righteousness

3. What is the result of all this? 17

4. Paul charges Timothy to serve a number of functions. 2

What do each of the following mean:

Preach the Word (be ready in season and out of season)

Reprove

Rebuke

Exhort (with complete patience and teaching)

How do they relate to the functions of Scripture in 3:16?

5. What incentives are provided to be engaged in this difficult work? (3:10, 14; 4:1, 6-8)

## Reflect

Is the Bible more like a hobby or a habit for you?

What will you do to make reading, obeying, and teaching the Bible a habit in your life?

## Take-aways

Share with the group your take-away from this discussion.

## Memory Verse – Ezra 7:10

*For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.*