

<sup>24</sup> “For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances. <sup>28</sup> You will live in the land that I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

— *Ezekiel 36:24-28*

### ***Discussion/Journal Questions***

As you look forward at the Christmas season, what are the dominant emotions that you feel? Joy? Sorrow? Wonder? Dread?

What are some of the reasons people may feel less than joyful this time of year?

Have two or three people read Ezekiel 36:24-28 out loud slowly. After some time of reflection, ask each other what words, phrases, or ideas stand out to everyone. What questions come to mind as you meditate on this scripture?

Ezekiel records just one of many promises God made to the people of Israel concerning His plans for them. But if you were a Jewish person living under Roman rule, what you think about these promises? Would you hold onto hope or give up?

John said in the sermon this week, “When reality doesn’t meet our expectations, we can become deeply hurt.” How have you experienced this in your own life?

John introduced us to the concept of WLVS. We are **wounded**, and the enemy takes advantage by **lying** to us. Believing the lies, we make **vows** to protect ourselves, and when we live out those vows, the fruit of our actions becomes **strongholds**. Again, how have you seen this progression play out in your life?

In dealing with the hurt caused by WLVS, we have practical tools that can help us live in the freedom Christ won for us: **Build Joy, Take Thoughts Captive, Forgiveness, and Listening Prayer**. Of these four, which do you need to focus on the most this season?

How can your group pray for or walk with you during this season?