



Week 5 - Ezra 9,10

Looking back:

Care

How is everyone in the group doing this week? Did anything significant happen you would like to share with your friends? How can your group pray for you this week?

Loving Accountability

Did you find hope in celebration this week? Share with your group how celebrating His provision increased your faith and peace.

Looking up:

Practice

Have someone in the group recount the events of Ezra 9-10. Have the Israelites ever been *unfaithful* before? Have someone try to recall or find an example in their Study Bible.

Learning to obey Jesus

1. **Read Ezra 9:1, 2, 2 Chronicles 36:14-21, 1 Kings 11:1-13.** What was the **spiritual problem** Ezra discovered among the people? Why was it considered *unfaithfulness*? Who led the way in committing this unfaithfulness?
 - What happened to King Solomon due to his “many foreign wives”? How was his worship affected? Who did he end up building altars to? How do you feel upon reading this?
 - Think back to our Esther series. Why is it so important that the Israelites not only keep separate from the Ammonites and Amorites, but that they need to be destroyed altogether (**Esther 9:11-13**)? Who do the pagan nations operate under spiritually?

2. **Ezra 9:3-4, Numbers 14:1-9, 2 Samuel 13:30-39, Esther 4:1-4.** What does the tearing of clothing symbolize in Scripture?
 - Compare and contrast Ezra, Joshua and Caleb, King David, and Mordecai. Why did each of them tear their clothing? What did each of these people do after they repented?
 - Have you ever felt such godly sorrow? What does Jesus say about mourning (**Matthew 5:3-4**)?

3. **Read Ezra 9:5-15.** Are you willing to pray Ezra's prayer over your life, community, and nation?
 4. **Read Ezra 10:1-8, Read 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 18,** How do the leaders decide for Israel to deal with their sin? Pause to discuss with your group how you feel when you read this.
 - Did God ask the leaders to make this covenant? Do you think there was another way to deal with this problem in that context? Is this a response God would ask from us now?
 - How does this covenant the people made with God make you realize how much you need Jesus? Is it okay for a believer to marry a nonbeliever? If a Christian is already married to a nonbeliever, is the answer to divorce them? Turn to the NT to answer.
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Looking forward:

Spiritual Growth Assignment

We have learned in Ezra that the people of Israel were silent before the Lord as they listened to His law and teachings, and upon learning of God's holiness, they examined their lives for sin.

Spiritual Discipline: Silence and Self-Examination

King David is an excellent example of these spiritual disciplines. Let **Psalm 139:23-24** guide you: *Search me, oh God, and know my heart. Test me, and know my thoughts. Investigate my life, and point out anything in me that offends You. Examine me, oh Lord, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

Prayer

(A prayer of David regarding the time he had committed adultery: **Psalm 51:1-4, 10-12.**)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight; so You are right in Your verdict and justified when You judge. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
Amen.

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