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Faithful Service - God Works Through His Servants

Ezra 7:1-28

Ezra 7:1 NIV

After these things, during the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, ... the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest— this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him. Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.

7:8 Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king. He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. 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.

7:27 Praise be to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who has put it into the king's heart to bring honor to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way and who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

Key Verses

7:10 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.

7:28 Because the hand of the Lord my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

Follow the example of Ezra - the student, disciple, teacher and leader.

Scribes and Priests in Babylon



- Religious changes w/o Temple
 - from temple to synagogue
 - from animal sacrifice to study of Torah (Gen. – Deut.)
 - from sacrifice for forgiveness to prayer of repentance
 - from priest to rabbi
- Scribes were copyists, interpreters, teachers of Scripture

Why Send a Scribe?

- To rebuild Israel's life around Temple and Torah
- "Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you." (Deut. 4:1)
- "At five years of age, reading of Scripture; at ten years, learning the commentaries (Misnah); at thirteen years, bound to the commandments (Bar Mitzvah); at fifteen years, the study of theology (Talmud); at eighteen years, marriage; at twenty, the pursuit of trade or business." (1st century Jewish education)

Ezra the Student

- HEART - “Devoted himself to the study of the Law of the Lord.” (10)
- MIND - “Well versed in the Law of Moses.” (6)

Blessing

Witness

613 Commands Covering Daily Life

Worship Only God

No Idols

Respect His Name

Sabbath

Honor Parents

Don't Murder

No Adultery

Don't Steal

Don't Lie

Don't Covet

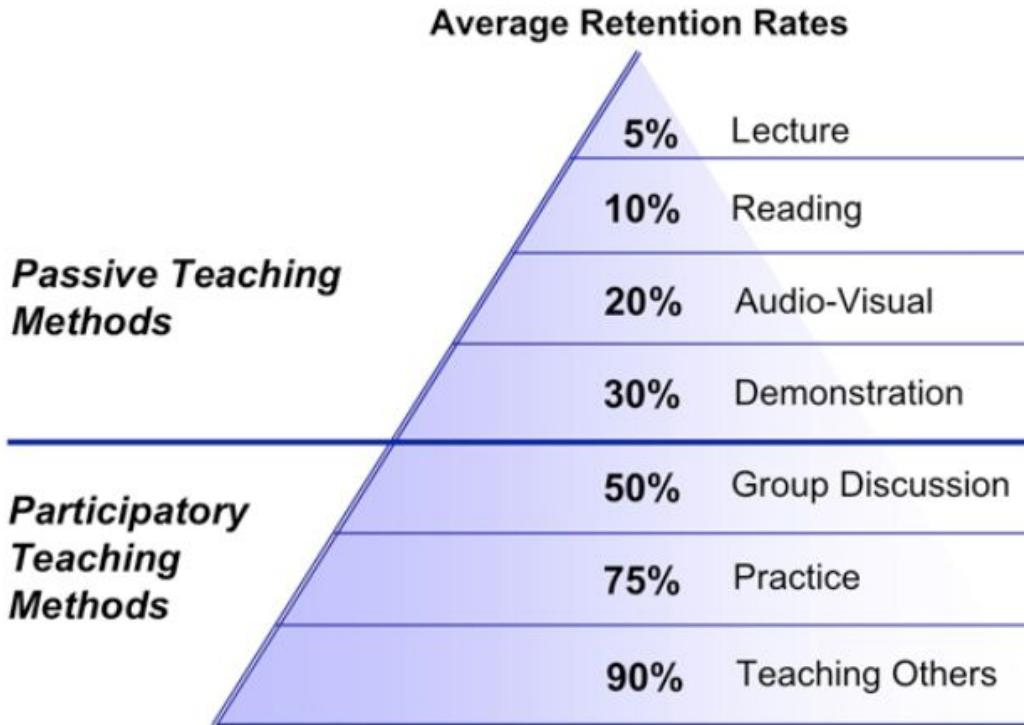
Moses – Love God, Love Your Neighbor

Abraham – Chosen To Be Blessed & To Be a Blessing

Ezra the Disciple

- **LIFE** - “Devoted himself to the observance of the Law of the Lord.” (10; Psa. 1:2)
- **WISDOM** - “The wisdom of your God, which you possess” (25; Heb. 5:14)

The Learning Pyramid*



*Adapted from National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine

Ezra the Teacher

- CALLING** - “Devoted himself to teaching (the Law’s) decrees and laws in Israel.” (10)
 - Call all Jews to obedience
 - Dual pillars of Temple Worship and Morality
- GOOD JUDGMENT** - “In accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people.” (25)

Ezra the Leader

- TRUST IN GOD - “Because the hand of the Lord his God was on me, I took courage.” (6, 9, 28)
- LEAD PEOPLE
 - “The king had granted Ezra everything he asked.” (6)
 - “I gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.” (28)

Live as Ezra Did

- “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter. 2:2ff)

What helps me:

- Start my day before God’s face, not before other faces
- “Daily Light on the Daily Path”
- Audio Bible (biblegateway.com/resources/audio/)
- Prayers of Scripture and the church
- Trusted teachers

Live as Ezra Did

- “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter. 2:2ff)
- “Pray also for me (Paul/our teachers, elders), that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.” (Eph. 6:19ff)

Teach as Ezra Did

- “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Tim. 4:16)

Blessing

Witness

Now these three things remain: faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love. (1 Cor. 13:13)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of
God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you
all. (2 Cor. 13:14)

For from Him and through Him and for Him are all
things. (Rom. 11:36)

Teach and Lead as Ezra Did

- “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Tim. 4:16)
- “Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” (2 Tim. 1:6ff)