

ALL WHO *COULD LISTEN*

unit 18 | session 2



CHRIST CONNECTION

Ezra taught God's law, and the people recognized their sin. Jesus came to die for our sin and give us power to turn away from sin. Through faith in Jesus, our hearts are changed so we can love and obey God.

TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Nehemiah 8

GOD'S LAW BRINGS GRIEF

NEHEMIAH 8:1-9

1 All the people gathered together at the square in front of the Water Gate. They asked the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses that the LORD had given Israel. 2 On the first day of the seventh month, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding. 3 While he was facing the square in front of the Water Gate, he read out of it from daybreak until noon before the men, the women, and those who could understand. All the people listened attentively to the book of the law. 4 The scribe Ezra stood on a high wooden platform made for this purpose. Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah stood beside him on his right; to his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-baddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5 Ezra opened the book in full view of all the people, since he was elevated above everyone. As he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and with their hands uplifted all the people said, "Amen, Amen!" Then they knelt low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. 7 Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah, who were Levites, explained the law to the people as they stood in their places. 8 They read out of the book of the law of God, translating and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was read. 9 Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all of them, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law.

GOD'S LAW BRINGS JOY

NEHEMIAH 8:10-12

10 Then he said to them, "Go and eat what is rich, drink what is sweet, and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, since today is holy to our LORD. Do not grieve, because the joy of the LORD is your strength." 11 And the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, since today is holy. Don't grieve." 12 Then all the people began to eat and drink, send portions, and have a great celebration, because they had understood the words that were explained to them.

MAIN POINT.

Our lives reveal our greatest treasure.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION SANCTIFICATION

After we are justified by faith, declared to be in right standing with God through the righteousness of Christ, we undergo a lifetime of sanctification, where we are continually made more like Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26; 2 Thess. 2:13). Scripture speaks of sanctification as a present position (we have already been sanctified) and as a continuing process. Sanctification affects the whole person, transforming one's heart, mind, and character to reflect Jesus.

DISCUSSION

GOD'S LAW BRINGS GRIEF

NEHEMIAH 8:1-9



- Besides the temple and city wall, what else was being rebuilt?
- ✝ • Why is culture (believers too) often unbothered by sin? When is the last time you wept over yours?
- ♥ • Why do you think the people valued God's Word so deeply? Why is it easy for us to take it lightly or ignore it?

GOD'S LAW BRINGS JOY

NEHEMIAH 8:10-12

- What is joy? Read Proverbs 17:22. What does joy do for us? How has joy strengthened you or someone else when life was tough?
- 🧠 • What is the difference in hearing God's Word and understanding it?
- What does the command to rejoice reveal about God's desire for us once we've repented of sin?



WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE SHOW THAT GOD'S WORD MATTERS TO YOU? ARE THERE AREAS THAT SAY OTHERWISE? WHAT STOPS YOU FROM TREASURING THE WORD?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

What's your greatest treasure? Think outside of material possessions. What do you consider most valuable in your life? Many of us might say we treasure our family members more than anything else. Maybe you treasure your friendships. How do you know what you treasure the most in life? You can tell what is of greatest value by looking at where you invest your time and energy. Your priorities reveal your greatest treasure. Jesus even taught that our hearts belong to what we treasure (Matt. 6:21). If we say we treasure God, then not only do our hearts belong to Him, but our priorities reflect that He matters. Our time and energy are spent in an effort to know Him and make Him known. So, examine your heart. What does your heart belong to? Though we may say we treasure Jesus, our lives say something else. Our priorities reveal that what we treasure most is self—our time, our comforts, our desires. What would it look like for your life to reflect that Jesus matters more than anything else—that He alone is your treasure?



DAY ONE

PSALM 119:105

Have you ever tried to walk through a dark room without turning on the light? Navigating it without bumping into anything or tripping over something would be nearly impossible. But what if someone handed you a flashlight? Then you could move confidently through the room, avoiding any missteps or falls. Our passage today describes God's Word as exactly that—a light to guide our path so we don't misstep or fall.

From our passage earlier this week, when the Israelites heard the Word of God and had it explained to them, they fell to the ground on their faces and worshiped God. God's Word brought them out of spiritual darkness and they were overwhelmed by what they saw. They had been starved for His Word while in exile, and hearing it was like opening a floodgate.

We so easily take for granted that we have God's Word at our fingertips, readily available to us at any given moment. But do we allow God's Word to illuminate our lives and reveal our sins? Do we allow His truths to consume our thoughts—to affect us so deeply that we fall to the ground and worship? We might say we believe God's Word is our light, but our actions often tell a different story—like having the flashlight but keeping it turned off and in our pockets. To truly reflect God's Word, we have to open it, read it, meditate on it, and live it out. It's an active process of letting His truth guide every single step. When we do, our lives become a testament to His light, showing others the way too.

- **HOW COULD SOMEONE TELL, JUST BY OBSERVING YOUR LIFE, THAT YOU VALUE GOD'S WORD?**
- **WHAT'S ONE AREA OF YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU NEED GOD'S WORD TO BE A "LAMP" OR "LIGHT" RIGHT NOW?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORD, WHICH IS A
LAMP FOR MY FEET AND A LIGHT ON MY PATH. HELP
ME NOT JUST TO READ IT BUT TO TRULY LIVE IT OUT.
MAY MY LIFE REFLECT YOUR TRUTH AND LIGHT TO
EVERYONE AROUND ME.





DAY TWO

JOSHUA 1:8

Joshua had a big task ahead of him. Moses—who led the Israelites out of Egypt, who presented God’s commandments to them, who led them for forty years through the wilderness—was dead. As the new leader of the Israelites, God tasked Joshua to lead them into the promised land. No pressure, right? Joshua had a huge responsibility. But God gave him some crucial advice in Joshua 1:8: “Read, meditate, and observe My Word, and you will be successful.”

God didn’t say: “Read it a few times for a few minutes and think about it every now and then.” No, Joshua was to saturate himself with it, speak about it, share it, let it influence his conversations. The truths of the Bible should be so ingrained in us that they naturally come out in how we talk and interact with others. Meditating on God’s Word means to really think about it and chew on it, letting it sink deep into our minds and hearts. It’s not just checking off a box for quiet time; it’s allowing God’s truth to shape our thoughts and perspectives throughout our entire day. And then? We’re supposed to live it. This is where our lives really start to reflect whether or not we truly treasure God’s Word. It’s one thing to know what the Bible says; it’s another to actually apply it. When you choose kindness over gossip, purity over impurity, forgiveness over holding a grudge, honesty over a small lie—that’s God’s Word living through you. That’s your life reflecting His truth.

Joshua was pretty successful. He led the Israelites through many battles into the promised land and lived to be 110 years old. And at the end of his life, while others did not, he still chose the Lord; he still treasured God’s truth (24:14). May this be said of us one day too.

- **WHAT’S ONE PRACTICAL WAY YOU CAN “MEDITATE” ON GOD’S WORD THROUGHOUT YOUR DAY, EVEN IF YOU’RE BUSY?**
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO “REFLECT” GOD’S WORD TO OTHERS? DOES YOUR LIFE DO THIS?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIVING WORD. HELP ME TO NOT JUST READ IT BUT TO TRULY MEDITATE ON IT AND LET IT SHAPE EVERY PART OF MY LIFE. MAY MY ACTIONS AND WORDS ALWAYS REFLECT YOUR TRUTH AND BRING GLORY TO YOUR NAME.



DAY THREE

JAMES 1:22-25

How many times a day do you think you look at your reflection in a mirror, window, or other shiny surface? Probably several times a day. Our culture is fairly obsessed with looks; we often don't realize how much emphasis we place on them too. We look for what needs fixing or adjusting, and then we go about our day. But what if, after looking, we immediately forgot what we looked like? That would be pretty unhelpful!

James 1:22-25 gives us a powerful analogy about looking in a mirror. Here, God's Word is the mirror. When we read the Bible or hear God's Word in a sermon, we see who we are in light of God's truth. Scripture reveals areas where we need to grow, attitudes we need to change, and actions we need to take. It shows us what a Christ-like life looks like. The problem, James explained, is that if we just listen and don't act on what we learn, we fool ourselves. Simply knowing what's right is not enough. If we treasure God's Word, we don't just know it; we do it! Treasuring God's Word means letting what we hear and read transform our hearts—how we live! If God's Word tells us to be kind, then our lives should reflect kindness. If it tells us to forgive, then we should actively practice forgiveness. The Bible isn't just about following rules; it's about embracing the "perfect law of freedom." When we truly live out God's Word, we experience the real blessing and freedom that comes from walking in His ways instead of being enslaved to the sinful desires of this world. God's Word shows us how to live as freed people. So, when you open your Bible, don't just read it. Look closely. See yourself in its truth. And then, intentionally choose to live it out. Be a reflection of God's amazing Word!

- **WHAT'S A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING YOU'VE LEARNED FROM GOD'S WORD RECENTLY THAT YOU'VE TRIED TO APPLY?**
- **WHY IS ACTIVELY LIVING OUT GOD'S WORD THE WAY TO "FREEDOM," AS JAMES MENTIONS? WHY DO WE OFTEN VIEW GOD'S WORD AS A LIST OF RULES INSTEAD?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORD. HELP ME NOT JUST BE A HEARER BUT ALSO A DOER OF YOUR WORD. MAY MY LIFE TRULY REFLECT YOUR TRUTH AND BRING YOU GLORY.



DAY FOUR

MATTHEW 7:24-27

Today's passage comes straight from Jesus. He told a parable (a simple story with a spiritual lesson) about two builders. One built his house on a rock and one on the sand. Storms blew in and the house on the rock survived while the house built on the sand collapsed. So what was He really talking about here? Jesus wasn't handing out architectural advice on how to build a sandcastle. He was talking about how to build our lives. He was telling us that the way we respond to His words—what we do with what we hear from the Bible—is like choosing the foundation for our lives.

Wise builders hear Jesus's words and put them into practice. They actively apply them to their lives. And then when the storms of life come, they won't collapse because their foundation—Jesus's words—is solid. Sturdy. Incapable of shifting. However, if they choose to be foolish builders—hearing Jesus's words without acting on them—the storms of life will overwhelm and destroy their shaky foundation. These people might know what the Bible says, but they don't let it shape their actions or decisions; they don't let it take root. And they will crumble when sickness or death or disappointment makes its way into their lives.

So, how are you building your life? Are you just hearing God's Word, or are you truly building your life on its strong foundation? Let's be wise builders and let God's truth shape who we are and what we do.

- **WHAT "STORMS" DO STUDENTS COMMONLY FACE TODAY THAT CAN SHAKE A PERSON'S "FOUNDATION"?**
- **WHO ARE SOME OF THE "WISE BUILDERS" IN YOUR LIFE? WHEN THEY'VE FACED STORMS, HOW DID YOU KNOW THEIR FOUNDATION WAS SOLID?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, HELP ME NOT JUST TO HEAR YOUR TRUTH BUT TO ACTIVELY BUILD MY LIFE ON IT EACH DAY. MAY MY LIFE REFLECT THE STRONG FOUNDATION OF YOUR LOVE AND WISDOM.



DAY FIVE

PSALM 1:1-3

Imagine a strong, healthy tree, whose roots reach deep down into the ground, drawing up all the good nutrients it needs. It stands tall, with green leaves, and regularly produces fruit. Even when things get tough—a drought, a big storm—this tree just keeps on thriving. Now, picture a scraggly, weak sapling trying to grow in really poor soil, maybe even next to a busy road where it gets thrown around. It struggles to survive, and it rarely, if ever, produces fruit. Which tree do you want to be?

Psalm 1:1-3 paints a picture similar to these trees, but the psalmist is talking about us—how our lives reflect where we choose to “plant” ourselves. This passage shows us two paths. The first path involves going along with “the wicked”—negative influences, worldly opinions, people who mock what’s good and pull you away from your relationship with Jesus. If we spend our time in that “soil,” our lives won’t be spiritually productive or fruitful. But the second path, the blessed path, is about delighting in God’s Word. “Delighting” means loving it, finding joy in it, and making it a priority. It’s not just about reading it quickly but meditating on it day and night—really consuming it and applying it to our lives. When we do this, we become like that strong tree, planted by “flowing streams.” God’s Word is that living water, constantly nourishing us. When you consistently soak in God’s truth, your life will reflect it. You’ll bear fruit (Gal. 5:22-23). You won’t “wither” when difficulties come because you’re rooted deeply in something eternal. Living a life rooted in God’s Word means your actions, your choices, and your character will shine differently, showing the world that your delight is in Jesus.

- **HOW DOES “DELIGHTING” IN GOD’S WORD DIFFER FROM JUST READING IT? WHAT MIGHT “MEDITATING ON IT DAY AND NIGHT” PRACTICALLY LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?**
- **WHAT KIND OF SPIRITUAL “FRUIT” DO YOU HOPE TO SEE IN YOUR LIFE AS YOU GROW CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH HIS WORD?**

PRAY

**LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIVING WORD THAT
NOURISHES MY SOUL. HELP ME TO DELIGHT IN YOUR
WORD AND TO MEDITATE ON IT DAILY.**