

Ezra Read the Law (Ezra 7–10; Nehemiah 8)



Dear families,

Find 1 John 1:9 in your Bible and read it slowly two or three times. Many Christians are familiar with these words; perhaps you have them memorized. We agree that God wants us to confess our sins to Him. We believe that God is faithful to forgive His children by the blood of Jesus. But do you find it easy to confess your sin to God? If not, why? Do you believe the lie that keeping quiet about our sin will prevent God from knowing about it?

In Ezra 9, leaders approached Ezra and declared to him the grim reality of the people of Israel who were caught up in devious behavior and lifestyles. Following the second return of exiles to Jerusalem, the men of Israel began to intermarry with foreign women again. It was as if they had completely forgotten God. Ezra's response of honest confession before a holy God ought to teach us something about his character and about our need to do likewise.

First, Ezra stood before God and the faithful of Israel, and he cried out before the Lord. Ezra didn't point fingers as he went before God. He didn't shift the blame or use the chance to gossip about others in his community. Ezra did precisely what we see later recorded in 1 John 1:9: he confessed his sin to God.

Ezra truly believed that it was right to bring his sin and the sin of his community before God, to lay it all out before the Lord and to seek God's forgiveness by faith and repentance. And not only did Ezra see the good of confession, he found reason to celebrate as he did.

Read Ezra 9:13. Ezra recognized the necessity of confession and then celebrated that God's grace was still enough, still active, and still effective toward His people.

Ezra took his sin seriously and confessed it before a holy God. And Ezra confessed with hope that the God he had sinned against, had been gracious and would continue to be so.

When we bring our sin before God, let us do so with humility rooted in our deep need for God and confidence grounded in our understanding of His amazing grace.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** The Bible helps us know the right things to do. We do wrong things, but God can help us want to obey Him. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.
- **Younger Preschool:** The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It helps us know the right things to do. We do wrong things, but God can help us want to obey Him. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.
- **Older Preschool:** The Bible teaches us about God and Jesus. It helps us know the right things to do. We do wrong things a lot, but God can change our hearts and help us say no to sin. Jesus died to rescue us from sin.
- **Kids:** God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people loved God more and changed their ways. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Younger Preschool:** How should we feel when we make wrong choices? When we make wrong choices, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to obey Him.
- **Older Preschool:** How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and choose to obey Him.
- **Kids:** How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to turn from our sin because we love Him.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We should feel sorry when we disobey God. 2 Corinthians 7:10
- **Younger Preschool:** We should feel sorry when we disobey God and want to obey Him. 2 Corinthians 7:10
- **Older Preschool:** Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. 2 Corinthians 7:10
- **Kids:** For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

** **Next week:** The People Promised to Be Faithful (Nehemiah 9–10)