

FAITH BIBLE READING

Aug 6-12, 2018

At Faith Baptist Fellowship, we *Love God's Word and Prayer* (Ephesians 6:17-18)! Take the 'sword of the Spirit' (God's Word) and persevere in prayer! In this year, ask God each day to speak directly to you from the Scripture portions you read.

Our plan for 2018 will be taken from the Discipleship Journal Bible Reading Plan. Monday-Saturday we will focus on one main devotional passage; the additional readings will keep you on track to finish the entire Bible in one year. On Sunday, we will have a passage from the upcoming Sunday sermon along with questions for Faith Group discussion.

We suggest having a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts/insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray.

Abbreviations: **TAI** – Think About It | **PP** – Prayer Points

MONDAY, AUGUST 6

Read Ezra 7

TAI: In Ezra 1, we learned that 42,360 Israelites had returned from Babylon. Why do you think God wanted to add Ezra to that? What made Ezra special? What desire had God planted in Ezra's heart? What shows us that God's hand was upon Ezra? Sending a teacher of the law was important to God, so the law should be important to us. But, weigh the law in light of Romans 9:30-32 and 10:13. What extra duties did the king assign to Ezra, and how do those fit with his role as a teacher?

PP: Praise God for his desire to send people the truth. Praise him for having the power to guide the actions of kings so that God's purposes are accomplished. Ask God to raise up teachers to show people that the only route to meet God's requirements is through faith in Jesus. Ask God to work so that leaders of countries will support such teachers. Talk with God about what role he has for you in sending gospel teachers.

Additional readings: Luke 14:15-24; 1 Timothy 3:11-16; Proverbs 5

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7

Read Ezra 8

TAI: From Ezra 6:16-22, we know that there were priests and Levites in Jerusalem. Why do you think Ezra felt it necessary to have more Levites travel to Jerusalem? The trip to Jerusalem would take 4 months (Ezra 7:8-9), giving plenty of time for attacks by bandits or enemies of Israel. If you had been in Ezra's shoes, would you have asked the king for an escort? What gave Ezra confidence that they could rely on God to see them through?

PP: Praise God for being greater than Satan or any human schemes. Praise God for making sure his plan will be fulfilled. Thank God for taking care of details and hazards of which we may not even be aware. Ask God for discernment for yourself and Faith Baptist to know when to take precautions and when to rely on God alone. Ask God to have his hand of protection over Christians worldwide so that the gospel can go forward.

Additional readings: Luke 14:25-35; 1 Timothy 4; Proverbs 6

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8

Read Ezra 9

TAI: Why was it wrong for the Israelites to intermarry with the other peoples? See Deuteronomy 7:1-4. Read verse 3 again regarding Ezra's reaction. Does that help us understand how God feels about sin? Ezra had not married a foreigner, so when Ezra prayed, why did he refer to "our" iniquities instead of "their" iniquities? Could that approach have helped the Israelites be united in their battle against sin? Did this sin make it seem like the Israelites had not learned from the exile?

PP: Let us join together in asking God for clarity regarding our own sin and the sin of others, and in asking for strength to resist Satan and set aside sin. Ask God for discernment to know whether those caught in sin need confrontation or for someone to come alongside and provide help and encouragement. Thank God that he is quick to forgive those who turn to him. Thank you, Jesus, for paying the penalty for us.

Additional Readings: Luke 15:1-10; 1 Timothy 5:1-15; Proverbs 7

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9

Read Ezra 10

TAI: How sad to read that the foreign wives and the children were to be set aside and separated from their husbands/fathers. This stresses that sin has consequences, and those consequences can impact those (like the children here) who had no choice about the sin. The next time you are tempted, will you think about the consequences? There are about 100 men listed who had married foreigners. This is a relatively small number compared to the total population of Israelites. This should remind us that no level of sin is acceptable to God.

PP: Praise God for his holiness and praise him for being without sin. Ask him to be at work rooting out sin, so that sin can be confessed and turned away from. Some of the priests had sinned. Pray that God will put a hedge of protection around the church leaders at Faith and leaders worldwide so that they will not stumble. Praise God that there is no sin so large that he will not forgive it if the sinner turns to him with a repentant heart and calls upon the name of Jesus.

Additional Readings: Luke 15:11-32; 1 Timothy 5:16-25; Proverbs 8

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10

Read Nehemiah 1-2

TAI: As cupbearer for the king, Nehemiah was well provided for, but he was not thinking just about himself. What did Nehemiah say was the source or cause of the problems that Israel was having? From 2:1-8, it is clear that Nehemiah had served faithfully and built a relationship with the king. What relationships are you building so that hearts will be open to God? What actions of the king make it clear that God was at work? Read again Nehemiah's response to those who raised questions.

PP: Praise God for being a restorer. Ask him to show you the brokenness around you so that you can first pray and confess the sins of yourself and others, and then ask that he show you where you should go and what to do to join him in building his kingdom. Pray that God will be at work to change the hearts of those who have rebelled against him.

Additional Readings: Luke 16:1-9; 1 Timothy 6:1-10; Proverbs 9

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

Read Nehemiah 3

TAI: Nehemiah was sure that God had called him to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but the end of chapter 2 shows that Nehemiah was clear that God was not saying that Nehemiah would do the work himself. As you read chapter 3, is it clear that God was still at work in this undertaking? Who was working in verse 1? Why do you think they are mentioned first?

PP: Praise God for working to bring people together. Ask God to work by the Holy Spirit to move Christians around the world to be at work building his kingdom. Pray for a spirit of cooperation that would span across denominational lines. Pray for wisdom as to who should travel and who should be working in their own neighborhoods.

Additional Readings: Luke 16:10-18; 1 Timothy 6:11-21; Proverbs 10:1-16

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

TAI & PP: Pray for Christians around the world to keep in mind that the Lord could return at any time, and we should be acting accordingly. Are the people you meet starving for love? Ask God to show you how you can love them. Many people at Faith have the gift of hospitality, but if that is not the gift that God has given you, ask God to fill you with the gift(s) that he has for you to use for his kingdom. See also Romans 12:4-8.

Pray for Deric and Rebecca Sneller as they use their spiritual gifts with Cadence International to (typically) reach people who are far from home and need the love of Christ. Ask God to be opening doors.