

The Joy of God's Promises!



READ: Nehemiah 8:1-12

All the people assembled with a unified purpose at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had given for Israel to obey.

² So on October 8, Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. ³ He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand.

All the people listened closely to the Book of the Law.

⁴ Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. To his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. To his left stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. ⁵ Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet.

⁶ Then Ezra praised the Lord, the great God, and all the people chanted, "Amen! Amen!" as they lifted their hands. **Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.**

⁷ The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah—then instructed the people in the Law while everyone remained in their places. ⁸ They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.

⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting for the people said to them, "Don't mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God." **For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.**

¹⁰ And Nehemiah continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. **This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!**"

¹¹ And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, "Hush! Don't weep! For this is a sacred day." ¹² So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's words and understood them.

REFLECT: WHY is God's Word so powerful in transforming our lives?

As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
Isaiah 55:10-11

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Hebrews 4:12

Q: HOW can God's promises continually influence our daily lives?

1. When we listen _____ to God's Word.

"All the people listened closely (attentively) to the Book of the Law." (Neh. 8:3)

"attentively/closely" (Heb: = leaning upon, facing toward, consumed)

2. We receive the _____ of God's Word, we cannot help but _____.

"Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground." (Neh. 8:6)

"No other habit can do more to transform your life and make you more like Jesus than daily reflection on Scripture. As we take the time to contemplate God's truth, seriously reflecting on the example of Christ, we are transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory."

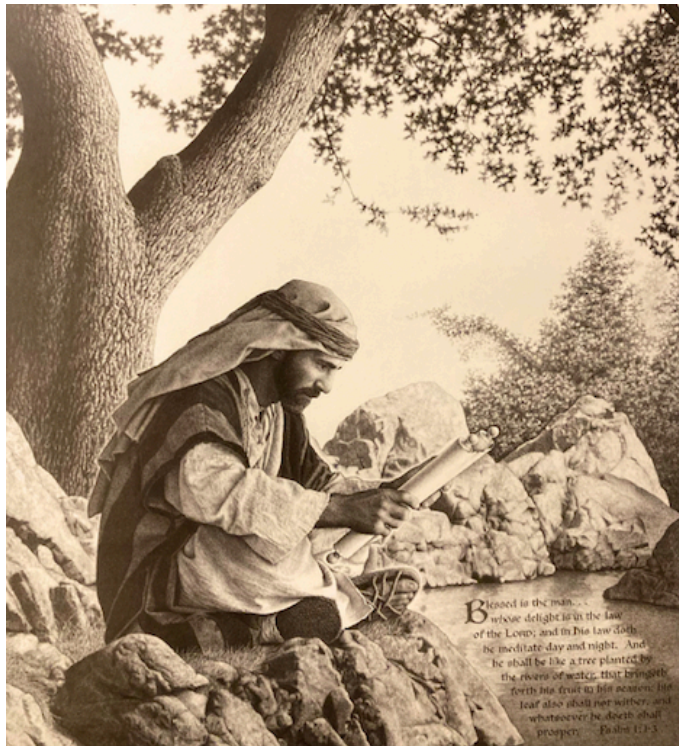
Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life

3. When the Word of God, in joint effort with the Holy Spirit,
 _____ us of _____ and our
true need for Jesus!

For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.
 (Neh. 8:9)

All Scripture is
 God-breathed
 and is useful for
 teaching,
 rebuking,
 correcting
 and training
 in righteousness,
 so that the
 servant of God
 may be
 thoroughly
 equipped for
 every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17



4. When His Word and His presence is the springboard to real
 _____ and _____ in our lives!

This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!" Neh. 8:10

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. John 15:10-11

Respond & Apply: Individual & Small Group Discussion Guide

Take some time to reflect on patterns that the Apostle Paul reminded the Colossian believers to take hold of in their lives.
 How are you experiencing the reality of these challenges in your own life?
 What is God calling you into right now?

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves,
 you must clothe yourselves
 with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults,
 and forgive anyone who offends you.

Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love,
 which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.
 For as members of one body you are called to live in peace.
 And always be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.
 Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives.

Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.
¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus,
 giving thanks through him to God the Father.

"God's Word is the only thing that can satisfy your spiritual thirst."
 Jim George, A Man After God's Own Heart--A Devotional

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 With God and others.**
- 3. We are passionate about investing in children, youth, and families.**
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