

The Return Home

Day One – Time to Return

Today's reading: Page 263 through break on page 266

This reading covers: Ezra 1-4

Summary: God uses a pagan king to call his people to return to their homeland.

Consider this:

King Cyrus was not a believer in God. In your journey with God or toward God, can you recall people or circumstances that profoundly impacted your journey, even though the people were not believers, nor the circumstances joyful? Maybe there was a strained relationship, a job loss, a broken family, and yet even those were used by God to draw you to him. Can you come to the point of thanking God for his plan and his presence in the circumstances? Can you find joy in the journey?

Look up Malachi 3:16. God asks us to “keep a scroll of remembrance.” Remembering God’s touch in our story is essential to understanding his story for us.

For further reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; Romans 8:28

Prayer:

Heavenly Father I am so grateful that once again I know you see the big picture of my story long before I see the end of a chapter. I thank you for the people and circumstances you have allowed in my life to draw me closer to you, even when it doesn't seem good at the time. I want to trust you with your purpose and your will. Strengthen my faith and grow my trust. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Two – Time to Work

Today's reading: Break on page 266 through break on page 270

This reading covers: Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 1, 8

Summary: God's people are challenged to work and be encouraged about God's presence.

Building the temple was an enormous undertaking. When the exiles returned with good intentions to do so, they soon met with resistance. Neighboring nations did not want them to become a strong people under their God.

Consider this:

God sometimes asks us to take on more than we feel we can handle. Ultimately, he does so to complete his plan. But God never leaves us alone with a struggle. He is always with us. Without God's encouragement we might easily fall into despair.

God is with you! Where do you need this encouragement today? Take time to give it to God. Have confidence in him that no matter how big the task or how deep the hurt, God's will prevails ~ and he is with you.

For further reading: Ezra 3:10-13

Prayer:

You are with me! Lord, your promise means so much to me. I thank you that today you are with me. Please encourage me with your presence and make the victory yours. I will remember to give you the praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Three – Time to Celebrate

Today's reading: Break on page 270 through end of chapter

This reading covers: Ezra 5-6

Summary: With the help of a foreign king, the temple is completed.

The difficult, costly, time-consuming task of rebuilding the temple King Solomon first erected was completed, and a celebration was planned.

Consider this:

What do you need to celebrate today? Every day is a choice. We can wake up ready to celebrate our day's victories, or we can get out of bed lamenting the tasks and the people we are faced with. A simple change in attitude can make all the difference in our journey with Christ. Daily celebrating God's victories in us is a sure-fire way to become a believer with a positive attitude and one who lives in joy.

Any time we choose an attitude or action that reflects Christ, it is a victory over our sinful nature. Take time to list any recent victories, past or present, and thank God for his presence, his strength and his joy over you. Our God is mighty to save! And he rejoices over our victories.

For further reading: Zephaniah 3:14-17

Prayer:

Use whatever victory you wrote in your journal to form a prayer of thankfulness to God for what he has seen you through.