

8. THE WORD

—Practice and Teach

Of the many sobering verses in the Bible one that is very poignant is Judges 2:10: “*And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.*” Every generation bears responsibility to help the next generation know the Lord and His work.

Centuries after the time of Judges, a Jewish priest and scribe named Ezra (480-440 BC), led a group of exiles from Babylon back to Jerusalem to reintroduce the Torah. He wanted them to know the Lord and His word and His work. We see this unfold in Ezra 7:9-10: “*For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.*”

Notice the progression: 1. *Set his heart* 2. *Study* 3. *Practice* 4. *Teach*

As we grow in God, we want to emulate Ezra’s example of practicing - or obeying - God’s word and teaching others to do so as well. The ultimate example of this is Jesus Himself, who obeyed our Father in ways we never will. As we learn to obey Him, our lives are transformed into God’s likeness. But when we don’t obey as we should, we can rely on Christ’s perfect obedience which covers us with forgiveness. Nevertheless, we are better for it when we obey.

Practice/Obey -

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20. How do you understand the blessing and curse that Israel faced? Do we face the same choices? Consider Luke 9:23-25, Acts 2:37-39. How do you see Jesus fulfilling the blessing and curse in Deuteronomy?

Jesus had a lot to say about obedience:

Luke 6:46

Luke 8:21

Luke 11:28

John 3:36

John 7:17

As did Paul and James:

Romans 1:5, 15:18, 16:26

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

James 1:22-25

Teach -

We will look closely at the Great Commission in a later study, but read Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus wants his disciples to teach others to obey everything He taught them. And Paul says a similar thing to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:11 and 2 Timothy 2:2. *What do these verses imply for us?*

APPLICATION : Write in your journal issues of obedience that you need to bring before the Lord. In the way that Ezra “set his heart” to study, practice and teach, what are some resolves you can make in response? And as you think about teaching others, what audience comes to mind?