



INTRODUCTION

The returning exiles seek to walk by faith as they overcome the obstacles of their return to Jerusalem.

INSTRUCTIONS

This guide is meant to facilitate discussion which will lead to a response to God's word. Therefore, please use it as tool that best fits the needs of your community group.

OPENING DISCUSSION

- Read **Ezra Ch 8:15-36**.
- What do you find interesting/compelling/confusing about this passage?
- Are you a Practical Peter (God gave us a mind, so let's use it) or a Spiritual Sam (I have a big God, so let's depend on him to work in amazing ways)? Discuss.

REVIEW

- How does Ezra respond to a lack of Levites (v15)?
- From 8:21-23, what does it look like to seek God?
- Why does Ezra refuse the King's military escort (v22)?
- Why do they fast (v21, v23)? What is fasting and why is it important?
- Ezra appeals to God's holiness to motivate faithfulness in 8:28. What is the connection between the power of God's wrath in 8:22 and the appeal to God's holiness in 8:28?

APPLICATION

- If you had been in Ezra's shoes when no Levites joined the party of returnees (8:15), how would you have responded?
- Was Ezra right in rejecting military provision? What about Nehemiah (Neh 2:7-9)?
- How do we know when we should take a bold step of faith (like rejecting a military escort) and when we should walk by faith by using means and policies (like counting the money)?
- Have you ever taken a bold step of faith and then God miraculously provided? Discuss.
- Is prayer your first instinct in times of trouble or indecision?

PRAYER (divide the group based on gender if desired)

- What action/repentance does God want you to take according to the truths of this text?
- Are there any other prayer needs