

Think On This



Four Lessons (Ezra 7:10)

Ezra was a Jewish priest who was described as a skilled scribe in the Law of the Lord. (Ezra 7:6) Ezra returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity during the reign of Artaxerxes the King of Persia. (Ezra 7:1) Ezra was an individual who had courage and conviction to stand for the Law of the Lord and to teach others to do likewise. An important factor which contributed to Ezra's character is expressed in Ezra 7:10, *"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."* We too, need to embrace the four principles of this verse.

PREPARE THE HEART One problem that leads to a misunderstanding of the scriptures is an unprepared heart. Some go to the scriptures to prove their preconceived ideas or their man made doctrines instead of allowing the Bible to guide them. This attitude will lead to the misapplication of the word of God. A second problem that leads to an incorrect understanding of the word of God occurs when a person allows emotions and circumstances to circumvent the correct meaning of the scriptures. To overcome these hindrances it requires the preparation of the heart. (James 1:21) Let us be extremely careful that we do not set aside the truth (John 17:17/ God's word) due to a heart that is cluttered with preconceived ideas, unrestrained emotions or the doctrines of men.

SEEK THE LAW OF THE LORD Ezra also went to the proper source to be acceptable to God. Today there are many religious people who believe in Jesus yet follow the doctrines and teachings of men. Consider our Lord's warning in Mark 7:6-13. Remember, Jesus has all authority (Matthew 28:18) and His authority has been revealed to us through the teachings of the New Testament. (2nd Timothy 3:16-17) John clearly shows the importance of the doctrine of Christ by stating, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son."* (2nd John 9)

APPLY THE SCRIPTURES The application of the scriptures is crucial. Jesus warned, *"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46) Do you recall the Lord's teaching concerning the wise man and the foolish man? Both individuals heard the word of the Lord but only those who made application of the word were considered wise. (Matthew 7:24-27) Also, let us remember the importance of being a doer of the word of God as found in James 1:21-25.

TEACH OTHERS How often have you seen one's teachings overshadowed by a poor example or poor attitude? Therefore, it should be pointed out that to be an effective teacher one must exemplify the things being taught. Paul understood the importance of

one's example in teaching others as he instructs the Philippians (Philippians 2:14-15)
Remember, Timothy was told, *"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."* (1st Timothy 4:16)

CONCLUSION Each time you and I feed upon the word of God let us apply the four principles within **Ezra 7:10**: (1) prepare the heart (2) use the correct standard – the scriptures (3) make application to what we have learned (4) and share the teachings of Christ with others.

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