

## Personal weekly Bible readings to go deeper into Scripture.

*Memory Verse: Luke 1:38*

Day 1 – Chapter 22 of “The Story”

Day 2 – Luke 1 & Matthew 1

Day 3 – Luke 2

Day 4 – Matthew 2

Day 5 – John 1:1-14

### Questions to consider while reading the Bible:

Is there an example to follow?

Is there a sin to avoid?

Is there a promise to rely on?

Is there a command to obey?

Is there a challenge in which to respond?



***The Story: Rebuilding the Walls***

*February 16-17, 2013*

*“The Story” Chapter 21; Malachi 3:6-17*

Please use this space to take notes during the message today.



“On the day when I act,” says the Lord Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. Malachi 3:17

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## Adult and teen small group discussion points

Please use these discussion questions in your small group or with your teens.

1. What's the most extensive remodeling or construction project you have been involved in?
2. Ezra was "well versed" and "learned" (pp. 291-292) in God's Word. Share with your group who has been your most influential Bible teacher and why.
3. Ezra had devoted himself to studying God's Word and following what it teaches (Ezra 7:1-10; "The Story," pp. 291-292). How did Ezra's commitment to God's Word shape his life and ministry? Why is it so important that we do more than just know the content of the Bible but actually obey what it teaches?
4. God worked through King Artaxerxes to send the exiles back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and reestablish worship (Ezra 7:11-28; "The Story," pp. 293-294). How have you seen God use surprising people and circumstances to accomplish his will in this world?
5. Nehemiah was a man of prayer (Nehemiah 1,4,6; "The Story," pp. 294-299). What situations led Nehemiah to pray and what do we learn from his example?
6. Nehemiah's enemies tried to use the false prophet Shemaiah to distract him from the rebuilding project. How do you determine if a message is from God or another source?
7. Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament. He challenged the people to give God their first and best, not their last and leftovers (Mal. 1:6-10, 3:6-12; "The Story," pp. 302-304). What are some ways we give God our leftovers rather than our first and best?
8. The prophet Malachi was sent to correct the priests and the people (p. 301-303). What were they doing that dishonored God?
9. When the people of God heard the Word of God read, and had it explained, they moved into action. In this case, they reestablished the Feast of Tabernacles. Tell of a time you read the Bible or heard a message that you were moved to action because of what God taught you.



Close in Prayer

## Family's with kids discussion points

Please use these discussion questions with your children.

Memory Verse: Don't be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful.—Nehemiah 4:14

1. When the walls around Jerusalem were completed, the people celebrated. Ezra read God's law to them from sunrise to noon (Nehemiah 8:3). Why do you think he did that?
2. What's the longest you've ever been in church? What did you do?
3. After Ezra spoke, the people went away and celebrated with great joy, because they now understood God's Word. Why did they react this way?
4. Do you think knowing God's Word better, would help you (like it did for the people in Ezra's time?) How can you learn God's Word?

Family Activity: When Nehemiah learned that God's people were in great trouble and disgraced, he wept. He didn't want God's people to suffer. He wanted them to be safe and protected.

Sit down with your family and brainstorm ideas on what you could do to make God's people safer in your area. You could:

Extend a hand to a friend in trouble

Find a project to work on at school, church or in your neighborhood

There are tons of other ideas. Concentrate on ideas that will keep God's people safe, and then ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to make these ideas a reality. You may need to include another family from church or the whole congregation. Dream big. Nehemiah did, and God helped him accomplish his goal quickly.

Pray together: Lord, help us to remember that you are on our side, and that you proved it by sending Jesus to die and rise for us. Fill us with your Spirit, and lead us to your Word. Amen.

